



Maltby Hilltop School

an academy within Nexus MAT

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Thursday 7th January 2021

Dear families,

Happy New Year! I do hope the break was restful for you all.

Thank you all for bearing with us on Tuesday whilst we responded to the new third national lockdown.

Further to the calls we made on Tuesday, we now have a plan for the next fortnight and we'll continue to review our offer every two weeks, talking to all families. Thank you all for being so supportive and understanding.

As always, at the start of the new term there are a number of key messages I would like to share and/or reinforce with families:

Preventing COVID-19 infection

We are all very worried about COVID-19 and we are all trying to minimise the risk. If your child is unwell, it is really important that you keep them at home. We need to ensure that we have enough staff to support our pupils in classes. If we have large amounts of staff absence due to illness, we may have to communicate some last-minute temporary class closures. Please support us by ensuring that you keep your child at home if poorly, to reduce the risk of closures being required. Where we have COVID-19 positive cases in school, we will continue to adhere to the Government's self-isolation guidance.

Consistency in schooling

During the Autumn term, a number of classes missed quite a bit of schooling due to COVID-19 and self-isolation periods.

For us there are two issues:

1. Staffing levels – In line with our risk assessment, we cannot swap staff from one class/bubble to another so if we have a number of staff absences in one class we may need to close that class at short notice. We will do all we can to prevent this as I know it is difficult for parents and unsettling for pupils. We will make sure we tell you before 8am if we have to close a class and wherever possible we will plan beforehand, as we did on Tuesday;
2. Possible and/or confirmed COVID cases – We have a very clear and established procedure to follow and if we have a confirmed case, then the affected 'bubble' and anyone who had contact with that person will need to isolate for 10 days after possible contact.

Testing in school

I am really pleased to say we have had more than a thousand test kits delivered on Monday. Almost every single member of staff has tested themselves voluntarily and thus far we are all clear. Staff (including cleaners and kitchen staff) will continue to be provided with a test, weekly, in line with Government guidance. NHS staff continue to be tested weekly to enable them to work with students in school.

Testing is possible for our secondary and older students when and if they are in a bubble where someone has tested positive for COVID-19, though we do have concerns about how we determine when a young



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person's capacity to grant consent, rather than this just being provided by their parent(s) or legal guardian. We will issue more information about this to families once we have a clear position. We hope to roll out potential testing in the next couple of weeks and we will write to you separately. Please be assured no child will be tested without full understanding and consent from you and that individual student.

School attendance

If you have chosen for safety reasons to keep your child at home – no one will be fined or get a letter about non-attendance.

If you have elected to agree a leave of absence with school for your child at this time but want your child back at school, please let us know in advance so we can plan. We are reviewing arrangements every fortnight, but if families find they are hitting a crisis point they can contact us at any time.

If you can let us know by Wednesday 13th January that would like to change your child's attendance arrangements for the following week, we will try our best to accommodate this. Please let us know weekly by Wednesday so we can plan for the following week.

Meetings

Throughout the national lockdown, we are planning to hold all meetings virtually to minimise the number of visitors in school. This will generally be done via Microsoft Teams or it could be a phone call if preferred. We will send more information regarding this.

Working with others in school

A number of our students have individual programmes that support their EHCP and progress. This can include, hydrotherapy/swimming, rebound/trampoline, mental wellbeing, sensory integration and phonic/reading or communication support. If your child routinely accesses these we will be contacting you by text or MyEd to check you are still OK for your child to access this. Please just indicate your consent or not so we can be sure we are following your wishes in our 3rd lockdown.

Parent's Facebook

Just a bit of a reminder about the parents Facebook page. Becky Earp (who has a child at Hilltop) is our parent carer ambassador and does a brilliant job of keeping parents in touch with each other. If you are new to Hilltop please contact Becky on rebeccaearp34@aol.co.uk to join. This is especially important at such a difficult and stressful time.

If you have any particular concerns please contact your key worker, class teacher or myself.

David Burdett
Headteacher