

Date: 23/02/2021

Dear Parents/Carers

### Reopening of Schools

I hope this letter finds you all well and hope that you managed a well-deserved rest from home schooling over the half term break. I cannot thank you enough for your hard work and commitment to ensuring your child or children have been able to access their online learning since Christmas. It has been tough, you have been remarkable - thank you. I would like to also thank those of you who took some time out to complete our Remote Learning survey before the half term break. Your responses were overwhelmingly positive and were very much welcomed. All responses have been analysed and shared with all Headteachers.

I am sure you all tuned in yesterday evening to listen to our Prime Minister introduce the Government's 'roadmap' out of Lockdown and his announcement that schools and colleges will reopen to all pupils from 8th March. The reopening of education settings to all is being prioritised due to the significant impact caused by being out of school to the mental and physical health and wellbeing of children and young people. I have always expressed to you my desire to get all of our pupils back to full time school as soon as possible and am delighted that we have now been given the green light to do so. I would however like to clarify some points and must stress that more detailed information will be sent to you from your child's school in due course.

A summary of the main points made yesterday for schools is as follows:

- Schools and colleges will reopen to all pupils from 8th March.
- All primary school children will return on Monday 8th March, as staff continue to take two rapid COVID-19 tests each week at home.
- All secondary school and college students will take Covid-19 tests as they return to the classroom from the 8th March. Secondary schools and colleges will have discretion on how to stagger the return of their students over that week to allow them to be tested on return. After an initial programme of three tests in school or college, students will be provided with two rapid tests to use each week at home (see below).
- Secondary school and college staff will also be provided with two tests to use each week at home.
- Protective measures across education will be strengthened. Staff and students in secondary schools and colleges are advised to wear face coverings in all areas, including classrooms, where social distancing cannot be maintained as a temporary extra measure.

So, for Northern Ambition Academies Trust, **all of our primary schools will open to all pupils from Monday 8th March.** More detailed information as to how this will work will be sent to you in due course.

**Airedale Academy will introduce a phased return for pupils over the course of the week commencing 8th March, with all pupils being in full attendance from the 15th March.** More details about the phased return and the testing of pupils will be sent to you shortly.

### Attendance

The government has made it very clear that **attendance to school will be mandatory for all pupils.** The usual rules and duties around school attendance will therefore be in place from 8th March and the Trust expectations about regular attendance will remain. As we did during the initial stages of our last school reopening, all schools will work closely with you to ensure your child attends school on a daily basis.

### Rapid Testing

The evidence shows that as many as one in three people who contract the virus show no symptoms, so could be spreading the disease unknowingly. Asymptomatic testing is designed to help to identify positive cases more quickly and break the chains of transmission.

Since January, our schools have been involved in a fantastic national effort to test our staff. The government has made it clear that rapid testing will continue to remain a vital part of their plan to suppress the virus, in education and

childcare settings and across society. This sort of testing means that asymptomatic people who might otherwise continue to attend our schools are identified and self-isolate.

Twice-weekly asymptomatic testing is already available for all Trust staff. The government is now asking that we have this in place for all Airedale Academy students, at the existing school-based test facilities, across the week of the 8th March as they return, with subsequent asymptomatic testing to be done in the home. More details about this will be sent to you shortly.

### **Safety Measures**

Your feedback told us that you were confident in the safety measures our schools had in place prior to this current lockdown and closure of our schools. Please be assured that the same protective measures will remain in place, with some strengthening, as your children return to school. As always, we will be following government guidance and using their 'system of controls' to support our risk assessments and the implementation of measures to mitigate risk. We will be retaining bubbles of pupils across all schools and will be asking staff and pupils to continue to do everything they can to adhere to these measures. It remains vital that they are implemented well and consistently.

### **Face coverings**

The system of controls has been strengthened. The DfE has strengthened existing protective measures in schools and colleges with adults and pupils in year 7 and above to wear face coverings in all indoor settings, including classrooms as an extra temporary precaution.

Within our primary schools and early year's settings, face coverings should be worn by staff and adult visitors where social distancing between adults is not possible. Children in primary schools do not need to wear a face covering.

We are looking forward to welcoming your children back to school and will continue to do all we can to ensure all pupils and staff are safe. Thank you as always for your patience and cooperation as we now navigate our way through the journey out of lockdown. Please look out for further details from your child's school which will give you more information about reopening.

Please do continue to take care,

Yours faithfully,



**Elizabeth Fairhurst**

*Chief Executive*

Northern Ambition Academies Trust