



## Northern Ambition Academies Trust

Crewe Road, Airedale, Castleford WF10 3JU – Tel: 01977 664555 – Fax: 01977 664556

Date: 21/10/2020

Dear Parents/Carers

I hope this letter finds you all well.

As we fast approach the October half term holiday, I want to take this opportunity to thank you, yet again, for your ongoing patience and understanding during these very difficult times. As a Trust we are extremely proud of the positive start back to school we have seen for all pupils and staff since the 7th September. Our attendance across all schools has been above both the current national and local averages, which is testament to our schools' comprehensive opening plans and the confidence you, as parents and carers, have in us to keep your children safe. We will continue to work with you to ensure all of our pupils attend school and it remains vital that you work with us so we can support you and your child/children as best we can.

Inevitably, we have seen positive cases of Covid-19 amongst some of our staff and pupils over the course of this half term, but these numbers are low in comparison with other areas. As announced by the Prime Minister on 12<sup>th</sup> October, Wakefield is now a 'high alert' area. This has no direct impact on our schools, other than that the wearing of a face covering in communal areas is now expected for both staff and students at Airedale Academy. Most students have embraced the wearing of face coverings positively and maturely since the school reopened, for which we are very grateful.

We have thorough risk assessments in place to ensure that risk of transmission within our schools is low and we strictly adhere to Public Health advice and guidance should we be made aware of a positive case. I appreciate that those of you who have had your child at home to self-isolate, or whose child has been asked by school to access their learning remotely due to staff shortages, will feel anxious and frustrated. It is far from ideal having some of our staff and pupils at home, but please be assured that such decisions are not made lightly. In order to follow government guidance and to keep everybody safe across all of our schools, such decisions simply have to be made and appropriate steps taken. I fully understand that such steps disrupt the traditional flow of learning and the school day for children but unfortunately there is no escaping this in the current climate. However, our continued aim is to have all pupils in school learning all of the time as far as possible.

### **Examination/Assessments 2021 - Update**

There has been much speculation in the media as to how children will be assessed next year and I'm sure that those of you who have children in key examination years will be eager to know what plans are being put in place. Although subject to change, the information below is what we know to date.

Primary – Phonic screening, Key stage 1 and Key stage 2 tests will take place in May and June.

Secondary – an announcement came on 12th October that GCSEs will take place in the summer term 2021 but 3 weeks later than usual. So rather than in mid-May, the summer exam series will therefore commence on 7th June 2021 and finish on 2nd July 2021. **However, one maths and one English GCSE exam will be held just before the May half-term (giving any Year 11 pupils who are affected by Covid-19 the best possible chance of still sitting a paper in each of these core subjects) GCSE results day will be 27th August 2021.**

Y13 - As soon as we have further information regarding BTEC examinations and results, we will let you know, although it is expected that awarding organisations will align the timing of BTEC qualifications with that for GCSEs.

Contingency measures will be developed, "in partnership with the sector", to address "the range of scenarios which might impact students' ability to sit exams". Ofqual will spend the next six weeks consulting on what these contingency measures might look like, with more detail to be published at a later date.

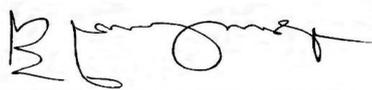
These are undoubtedly tough times for us all. The pandemic has challenged school systems around the world and continues to do so on a daily basis. I wish I could give you a date by which our lives and the running of our schools will return to some sense of normality, but I simply can't. During such turbulent times things change on a daily basis and we have to quickly adapt and face the next challenge. Although I can't give you an end date, I can reassure you that we remain resilient and upbeat here at Northern Ambition! This crisis has engendered incredible examples of team spirit, both within each school and between schools across the Trust. We will continue to do everything we can to keep your children equally resilient, positive and in school learning. If your child does have to access the remote learning on offer

from their school at any point, I can guarantee that this learning will be of high quality and will align with your child's normal curriculum. We will do our very best to support you and your family with this should you need it.

I ask that you continue to support us and protect yourself and your family by continuing to follow the government guidelines of Wash Hands, Cover Face and Make Space. Please can I also ask that you continue to maintain social distancing during school drop-offs and pick-ups, keeping a 2m distance from others at the school gates as our communities continue to face the ongoing challenges of Covid-19.

I wish you all a relaxing and enjoyable autumn break and look forward to welcoming our young people back to school on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> November.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Elizabeth Fairhurst', written over a light grey rectangular background.

**Elizabeth Fairhurst**

*Chief Executive*

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