



Poynton High School

and Performing Arts College

Head Teacher: Mr D. Waugh

Friday, 18 September 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

Ref: COVID Management Update 18th September 2020

I hope this letter finds you all safe and well. We have had an amazing start to the Autumn Term under what can only be described as unique and surreal times. All of our planning and preparations for the full reopening of school have paid dividends and our staff and students have played their part superbly. It has been a genuine privilege to have welcomed everyone back. These really are 'not normal' times and processes and activities that we have previously always done are perhaps now being done in a different way and the patience, acceptance and understanding by everyone in our school community has been inspiring. A genuine thank you from myself, our governors and our trustees. It is the greatest privilege of my career to serve this community and I continue to be inspired and humbled each and every single day.

Close Contact and Close Proximity: Respect my Space

A key strategy for managing the present situation is for everyone to 'Respect my Space'. The transfer of the virus will be abated if we continue to respect each other's space. This is especially key out in the community when students and families are not in their 'bubbles'. Please talk to your children about the need to protect, not only themselves, but also their families. They are not needed to follow these guidelines just at school, it is for the safety of every single one of us in our community. If we are to be able to continue effective education and offer the provision that you and they demand, we need to encourage all members of our community to RESPECT MY SPACE. It is possible for all of us to not break the close contact and close proximity guidelines. For your information, the definitions of these terms are:

- Close Contact = close face to face contact (under 1 metre) for any length of time – including talking to them or coughing on them; without any form of PPE
- Close Proximity = being within 1 to 2 metres of each other for more than 15 minutes – including travelling in a small vehicle; without any form of PPE

By respecting my space we are able to further protect each other.

In-school Curriculum

All of our students 'exist' in at least year group bubbles. In many cases, they exist in 'half year bubbles.' This means that they do not generally mix for sustained periods of time outside of this and therefore we are able to ensure that we do not break the close contact/proximity guidelines outside of the bubbles. We have been able to design our school so that our students are able to access the more

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difficult subjects under the present circumstances. For example, students are accessing the full suite of performing arts, expressive arts, PE and technology. As we have now settled back into a new routine, we will start to further introduce more practical elements to their curriculum such as workshop time, practical experiments in science and performances in dance and drama. You will soon be getting an e-mail in regards to the re-introduction of peripatetic music provision. This expanding and engaging curriculum provision is only possible because of the wider rules that we have introduced. Our students and staff have been exceptional in their compliance to the 'new norm' and this is allowing us to take these small steps forward in expanding our curriculum provision.

Remote-Learning Curriculum

We are continuing to expand our remote-learning curriculum. A key task for this is our planning for a "Tier 2" status. Tier 2 refers to a government or local instruction to secondary schools to adopt a rota system and limit on-site attendance. This would involve half of our students being present on site in week 1 and the other half in week 2. When they are not on site, students would be accessing remote at-home learning. We are very well placed for us to 'flick the switch' between whole groups in school and whole groups based at home. I will circulate the final details of this to all parents and carers by the 1st October. We have undertaken a significant amount of planning in this regard and all subjects in all year groups are ready for any such local or governmental instruction.

Alongside this, we are extensively developing our Tier 1 Phase 1 provision, i.e. our full in-school provision with a fluid in-school and at-home mix. In light of the challenges around testing and the lack of availability of such testing slots, it is emerging that the anticipated 24-48 hour turn around for a student self-isolating due to symptoms is becoming 5-7 days. Our systems have been established on a 24-48 hour level of fluidity and we are now rapidly upscaling this for a 5-7 day level. All students who are self-isolating at home now have access to the 'Self-Isolating School' in Google Classroom, more details about this will be circulated early next week.

Attendance

Thank you to everyone for being so proactive and supportive in getting our school back up and running fully. It is so heart-warming to see that our attendance rates for the start of this term are at 97%, an amazing figure under normal circumstances never mind these very fluid and challenging times. I would like to take this opportunity to remind all parents and carers about the symptoms of COVID:

- a high temperature – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)
- a new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)
- a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal

Most people with coronavirus have at least 1 of these symptoms. If you feel that your child has any of the main symptoms then you should aim to get a test for them as soon as possible. They should stay at home and not have visitors until a test result is achieved, only leaving the home to have a test. Anyone they live with, and anyone in their support bubble, must also stay at home until the test result is gained. Please ensure that you ring our absence line to advise us of the absence, stating clearly that it is due to COVID related symptoms. Cheshire East Local Authority have produced a parental flow chart guide that is very useful. We will send the link out to you separately to this letter.

PHS Covid-19 Case

Since the start of term we have only had one case of a positive test within our school community. A student in Year 13 tested positive, has self-isolated and has subsequently returned to their studies after the required self-isolation period. Initially, upon notification of the positive test result I asked that 42 Year 13 students self-isolate at home and 4 members of staff. Following advice from Public Health in regard to our stringent close proximity/contact set up I was able to ask 21 students and the 4 members of staff to return. The remaining 21 students will be returning to school on Monday of next week following their required period of self-isolation.

Overall, we are experiencing some challenges with regard to students and staff self-isolating while they arrange and wait for tests. The numbers are not extreme, approximately 20 students and 3 staff on average each day, however the turnaround time from the start of self-isolation through to booking a test, receiving that test and then getting the result is causing operational challenges. I have this week further enhanced the staffing and support systems in school to further enhance our provision. As a school, with over 1400 students and 170 staff, we were given 10 COVID testing kits. This week I have ordered more from the government portal and await a further delivery.

Masks and Hand Washing Update

As previously communicated, I review our position with regard to masks every two weeks. Following this review, I can confirm that I am keeping our position in regard to masks in place for at least the next two weeks, i.e. all students and staff must wear a face mask when in all internal communal spaces and when queuing (either inside the buildings or outside). These masks must be plain and without branding. Thank you for your support on this, our students have been fantastic in this regard. If you child travels on either public transport or a school bus they must wear their mask for the entire duration of the journey.

We continue to encourage all members of our community to regularly wash or sanitise their hands. I am once again further increasing the number of hand sanitiser stations in school and we will ultimately achieve close to 200 separate hand sanitiser or hand washing stations on site within the next 7 days. I would be very grateful if you could again talk to your children about the importance of personal hygiene; wash hands and 'catch-it, kill-it, bin-it'.

Journey to and from school

Apologies for once again asking for this but please if you live within 2 miles of site, your child should be walking to school. If you do have private transport to support them getting to school, please drop them off away from the school site. We need to ensure that we are protecting our whole community by attempting to eliminate all non-essential traffic around our school site. In addition, such a position is not possible for our primary school colleagues and in doing this for our site we will be helping our whole community avoid a community wide transmission issue. Thank you for your understanding on this matter. It has been exceptionally well adhered to but I am conscious that the dark mornings, the autumnal and winter weather will soon start to arrive.

Once again, my letters to you are rather extensive. I hope that this letter gives you a good flavour of the work in school and our continued planning as we move forward. I will write again on Friday 2nd October with another update in regard to COVID. Please note that we have two INSET days scheduled for Thursday 1st October and Friday 2nd October, this is to support our remote learning and our assessment work. This is an initial interim point by which we will be able to come together in staff teams to formalise the end of our recovery curriculum analysis and plan the next stage of their learning journey.



I hope this letter finds you all safe and well.

Yours faithfully

Mr David Waugh
Head Teacher



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