

16 November 2020

Dear parent/carer

Re: Principal's Update

Thank you for your ongoing support as the Academy responds to the challenges created by the COVID pandemic. Since we returned from October half term our Academy community has had four confirmed COVID cases. As a result of our robust protective measures this has resulted in only a small proportion of our students and a limited number of staff requiring to self-isolate. As cases of COVID continue to increase in our local area it continues to be important to follow government guidance. Students should:

- ensure they maintain social distancing on their way to and from the Academy and during social times
- wear a face mask, at all times, when travelling on school or public transport
- wear a face mask when in indoor communal spaces - please ensure you provide your child with a face mask, every day
- maintain good hand hygiene by washing and/or sanitising their hands regularly
- maintain good respiratory hygiene.

We have comprehensive plans in place to ensure learning is not disrupted when a student is self-isolating. Students will follow a typical Academy day; Tutor time (8.40am-9.05am) followed by three lessons (starting at 9.05am, 11.00am and 1.20pm). They will undertake a blended curriculum which will utilise live lessons, by Academy staff, on Microsoft Teams and video lessons using the government funded Oak National Academy.

Please ensure that you have completed our Home IT Devices Questionnaire to help us better understand students' IT access at home. A link to the questionnaire is below:

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=eBpyvmw9NUqUimgWHu2ZKos23kSXAsBKivu473Q4EAxUQktYOU9GV0VLUkU3R1cyOVE3M0JWQjdIVS4u>

We will provide paper-based resources if your child does not currently have access to the internet at home. Please contact your child's Pastoral Leader in this situation. Further, we are working to source appropriate hardware to lend to families, who do not have online access, to allow students to continue learning whilst self-isolating.

It is imperative that all students know their school email address and password in order to log in to Microsoft Teams. If your child does not know their log in details or is having difficulties accessing Microsoft Teams please contact us using the following email address:

ITSupportTDA@academytransformation.co.uk. Students have completed tutorials on how to access Microsoft Teams and we have provided support videos in the Home Learning tab on the Academy website www.dukeries.attrust.org.uk.

Attendance

Students should not attend the Academy if they, or any member of their household, have any COVID symptoms:

- recent onset of a new continuous cough
- a high temperature

- a loss of, or change in, your normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia)

Please seek advice from NHS 111 at <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/check-if-you-have-coronavirus-symptoms/> or by phoning 111. Contact your child's Pastoral Leader to inform us in this situation.

There is strong evidence that high levels of attendance results in exceptional progress and strong examination performance. Please ensure your child attends every day. If your child is ill, and not able to attend, please contact the Academy attendance line on 08442 393393 or text 07624 813575 every morning of the absence.

At TDA we recognise and celebrate great attendance. Our half term 2 Attendance Challenge starts on Monday 16 November 2020 and runs until the Christmas holiday. Students who attend every day for five weeks will receive a reward and be entered into an exciting prize draw. Students attending live lessons from home will be included in the challenge and students suffering from COVID will not be disadvantaged.

Behaviour

The Academy is a calm and purposeful place of learning. A significant majority of students have great attitudes to learning, work hard and make a really positive contribution to our Academy community, and I have been delighted to award recognition certificates and star badges for Integrity and Ambition over the past two weeks. This week marks the start of 'Excellence' week where we will be awarding 'Recognition Points' for students who are demonstrating 'Excellence' in all they do, whether this be at home for students self-isolating, or within school.

We are quickly moving towards our ambition of disruption free learning and, as a result, lessons are able to take place effectively without interference to students' learning. This is because students who do not meet our high standards are quickly dealt with using our robust and effective sanction and support systems.

Please see Facebook for further details of our 'Recognition', 'Remind' and 'Record' weeks.

Communication

We are continually exploring ways to improve our lines of communication, simplify our systems and ensure that our students have access to the very best learning opportunities both in the Academy and at home.

We wrote to you earlier this month to inform you of our move to Class Charts, a system that allows us to communicate with you in real time. We are using the Class Charts app to;

- send messages and alerts
- set Home Learning activities (this replaces Show My Homework)
- inform you, in real time, of negative behaviour incidents and detentions
- inform you of rewards and recognition
- allow you to monitor your child's attendance and punctuality.

From Monday 30 November the bulk of our communications regarding behaviour, detentions and homework will move to Class Charts and we will therefore no longer be sending text notifications regarding same day detentions. At the time of writing 60% of parents had logged onto the app. Please would you download and log onto the app as soon as possible. The app can be downloaded from the App or Play Store for use on iPhone and Android devices. Please ensure that you download the 'Parent' version and contact the Academy if you haven't received your individual log in code.

Annual Parent/Carer and Student Feedback Questionnaire

Feedback is a gift and helps us to understand both what we're doing well, and ways in which we can improve. Each year we seek your views about our Academy. I would be grateful if you could complete the short questionnaire at the link below before 5pm on Thursday 10 December 2020:

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/KHJYDP7>

There is also a student questionnaire which students will complete during tutor time over the next few weeks.

Cafeteria

Following feedback from students and parents/carers, we have adapted our COVID protective measures to allow students to eat lunch in the cafeteria. As we approach winter and the weather begins to deteriorate, we will open additional indoor spaces to ensure students stay warm and dry.

15 Mile Challenge

The annual Dukeries 15 Mile Challenge is now well and truly underway. As part of the Academy's focus on physical and emotional well-being, students and staff have been completing laps of our field during PE lessons and after school. Hundreds of miles have been clocked up already and I know that the year group and staff competitions are extremely competitive. Follow us on Twitter and Facebook to keep up to date with the competition.

Remembrance 2020

On Wednesday 11 November, the TDA community remembered the sacrifice of those who lost their lives during conflict and acts of terrorism. Students learned more about Remembrance Day through tutor time activities and observed a two minutes' silence. Students in the cadet force, Scouts, Guides and St John Ambulance wore their uniforms to the Academy as a mark of respect.

I had the privilege to take part in a poignant wreath laying ceremony with students in Year 11. The students read Dulce et Decorum Est by Wilfred Owen and War Photographer by Carol Ann Duffy. This was followed by a short drill by students in services uniform and the laying of a wreath. The ceremony culminated with two minutes silence and Mrs Russell reading 'For the Fallen' by Lawrence Binyon. We will remember them.

Community Action Response (CAR)

We are proud to be working in partnership with Ollerton Community Action Response (CAR). CAR was set up to support vulnerable people, in our local community, with emergency food parcels and telephone support during the COVID pandemic. To date it has provided over 80,000 meals.

We are asking members of our Academy community to donate dry, tinned and long-life goods for this fantastic project. Donations will be accepted every day in tutor groups and at the Academy reception. Please give what you can.

Students and staff will also be raising much needed funds for the CAR project in the build up to Christmas. Many events are being planned including our traditional Christmas Jumper Day. Follow our social media feeds to keep up to date with Academy events.

Kind regards



Mr Ged Rae
Principal