

23 October 2020

To parents and carers at all STAR Multi-Academy Trust Schools

We are now reaching the end of quite an emotional half-term within our schools. As described in the letter from Trustees a few weeks ago, we continue to be delighted with the enthusiasm and motivation shown by ALL. We are so glad to be back. That said, half-term will certainly see a chance to re-group and recover!

What comes next is unclear. Possibly we may be implementing additional local 'tiered' responses, or possibly even a national 'circuit breaker.'

At the STAR MAT, our schools aim to continue to play our part.

We have in place detailed operational contingency plans for each of our school sites. Unfortunately, local positive cases mean that several schools have already had to 'test out' contingency planning and it has worked well. Bubbles have closed without incident and remote learning has commenced smoothly. We are of course using each occurrence as a learning opportunity – none of us have done this before. Indeed, several months ago, most schools in the Trust hadn't even begun to use Google Classroom and we are already growing in expertise! THANK YOU for giving us continued feedback, thank you for understanding the complexity of what we are dealing with. Sometimes, health advice is to close a class for a day *whilst* we assess, which might seem perplexing from the outside, but it saves a rushed response especially for out of hours test result notification. The health advice we got in week two has now evolved and differs in week six – so where parents are used to consistency from their schools, they suddenly see us doing things differently. Strange times indeed.

Part of our contingency planning is of course for educational continuity. Every school has developed a Remote Learning offer and will have shared a Letter of Intent with you for what will happen in the event of school closure. We have also developed a Trust Remote Learning Policy) <https://web.starmat.uk/coronavirus-covid-19-updates/>. I would like to note the change in expectation from Spring/Summer terms to that which is now in place. Should a student need to self-isolate or a bubble close this term, there is now an expectation for *full engagement with all home-learning set*, unless a student is unwell. Learning activity is not optional and students should be available to learn during the hours of the school day. There is in fact a Temporary Continuity Direction in law to provide for this. Please support your school and your child in active engagement with all work set. Staff are working relentlessly to support on-site and distance learning and we really should not see additional resource implications to 'chase' remote learning.

Thank you for continuing to adhere to our Face Coverings Guidance. (<https://web.starmat.uk/coronavirus-covid-19-updates/>). We are pleased to have the support of all within our local school communities.

School risk assessments are working well. Cases are few and far between. Our local Public Health team are excellent – we have a contact on the end of the phone who supports each of our schools personally. Please be assured that your children's education is safe and secure and whether on-site or off, we will work our utmost to maximise your child's potential. In addition, every one of our Trust schools has been implementing additional pastoral/welfare identification and support strategies over this half-term. If you feel your child/family needs additional pastoral support, please just reach out to your child's school.

Yours faithfully,

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