

8 January 2021

TO ALL PARENTS/CARERS

Dear Parent/Carer

Can I firstly thank you for your patience and also thank your son/daughter for the fortitude s/he has demonstrated over not only the past week, but the past year while the government wrestles with getting this pandemic under control. We have watched in awe as most learners have shown remarkable resilience and maturity beyond their years while we as a school have had to adapt our routines and operations.

I can speak for all the staff at the academy when I say we firmly believe that the right place for all learners to be is in the academy. We do believe that we had made the academy as safe as possible and we were ready to test every learner. It was with great reluctance that we had to close our doors, but we understand and respect the decision made. We are working as hard as possible in the background so that we are ready and prepared for when we are allowed to welcome back learners and as soon as we are allowed to do so please be assured that we will let you know.

We are of course still open to learners who have parents/carers who are critical workers and also learners who may be defined as vulnerable. So that we can plan our support for these learners, we ask that should you fall into these categories you let us know by Thursday of each week about attendance in the following week. If we are not aware of your son/daughter needing transport, then we cannot ensure it will be there. As we recognise that childcare may be an issue for some families during February half term as they cannot rely on the family support structure, we will extend this offer to vulnerable and critical worker families over the half term break (15-19 February 2021 inclusive). If you feel that you would like to take us up on this offer, please can you let your son's/daughter's mentor know by Friday, 15 January 2021 so that appropriate plans can be put in place.

Unfortunately, it is regrettable that whilst nearly all learners have engaged with online activities in a mature and positive manner, a few have decided to disrupt learning with inappropriate messages, images and activities. I am sure you appreciate that it is very hard for us to police this and also enforce any type of sanction when learners are often performing under another learner's name or pseudonym. Can we ask you to remind your son/daughter that not only is this being broadcast into teachers' own homes, but also the homes of all the other learners in that class and potentially being seen by other parents/carers and children within that home.

If we identify these learners, then we will have little option but to not include them in online learning activities. As a consequence, we will place them in the vulnerable learner category and they will be asked to attend the academy. If the learners can be mature, recognise that we are trying as best we can to give them as good as an experience as we can and also appreciate that their actions are being seen by a wider audience than just their peers and teaching staff, we would be very appreciative.

For any learner who is struggling with their mental health and wellbeing, please also be assured that we have strong support structures in place and people that genuinely care. If you feel that your son/daughter requires our support in this way, please get in touch with us so we can put appropriate support in place.

Staff have been uplifted and encouraged by the many positive comments we have received this week from parents/carers and of course we are always open to suggestions on things we can do better. If you feel there is, please let us know what these are so we can open a constructive conversation with our staff.

Thank you for your continued support and please stay safe.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Mrs J McGuirk', written in a cursive style.

Mrs J McGuirk
Principal