

9 October 2020

TO ALL PARENTS/CARERS

Dear Parent/Carer

I fully understand the concern that the recent cases of COVID-19 in The JCB Academy have had a disproportional impact on the number of learners out of school. These measures are essential in preventing further escalation and ensuring that the academy can remain open.

Once we are informed about a positive case we have to track and trace any close contacts following government guidance. A 'contact' is defined as a person who has been close to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 anytime from two days before the person was symptomatic up to ten days from onset of symptoms (this is when they are infectious to others). Examples of a contact are a person who:

- spends significant time in the same household as a person who has tested positive for COVID-19;
- has had face-to-face contact (within one metre) with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, including:
 - being coughed on
 - having a face-to-face conversation within one metre
 - having skin-to-skin physical contact, or
 - contact within one metre for one minute or longer without face-to-face contact;
- has been within two metres of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 for more than 15 minutes;
- has travelled in a small vehicle with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 or in a large vehicle or plane near someone who has tested positive for COVID-19.

I have been asked about the new NHS app and if this is a possible solution to reduce the number of learners out of school without increasing the risk of escalation. Whilst the app may help with identification, there is no practical solution to contacts being identified due to travelling on the bus together. I did ask Public Health England about leaving gaps between seats between year groups on the bus, but the experts were clear that this would not change the situation. I will continue to ask these questions as the information regarding buses remains ambiguous.

Departments have been working hard to ensure that there is a good continuity of education, particularly for learners in Y11 and Y13 who have to self-isolate. Live lessons (where appropriate) and signposted videos of models used in lessons, together with well-planned directed practice are in place to support learners. I have attached a learner guide on how to access these live lessons. In addition to the work set on Google Classroom, learners have been advised to log on to the Oak National Academy lessons which cover nearly all of their GCSE subjects and are available online for all learners.

I am awaiting more information regarding the 2021 examinations in the summer. The Secretary of State for Education, Gavin Williamson, is due to make an announcement later this month regarding these. It is becoming more likely that there will be an increased emphasis on centre assessed grades. Learners who are self-regulated and work hard at learning and practising will not be disadvantaged this year and in fact are more likely to achieve the higher grades. There will be less opportunity for learners to attempt to sprint at the end and start revising just before examinations. Classwork and mock examinations will create a safety net for learners and they need to take these very seriously.

We had planned to reintroduce extension activities for after half term, however this is not possible in light of the increased infection rate throughout the area. We cannot increase the risk of escalation by taking learners away from school on off-site activities or by increasing the mixing of learners in sporting activities. Therefore, to make efficient use of the time on a Wednesday we plan to even out the week as follows:

Monday	08:30-15:30
Tuesday	08:30-15:30
Wednesday	08:30-15:30
Thursday	08:30-15:30
Friday	08:30-15:30

We have also reduced the use of different classrooms wherever possible.

This timetable will take effect directly after half term and an updated timetable for the afternoon buses will be shared with you early next week. We will review the situation in the spring and it is our intention in the spring and summer terms to look to provide opportunities for learners to participate in fun, exciting and developmental activities. This timetable is temporary and is being put in place due to our COVID-19 risk assessment of extension activities.



The Y11 Parents' Information Evening will follow a COVID-19 safe format in which parents/carers will be invited to go on to our website where you will find videos from each department and the pastoral team about how to support your son/daughter. These videos will give you all the information we would have shared had we been able to meet you in person. In addition to these videos, departments have highlighted some learners who will benefit from a one-to-one conversation with a member of staff. Virtual appointments will be organised for these families and will take place during the planned Parents' Information Evening.

I would like to ask for your support in ensuring your son/daughter attends the academy without increasing the risk of escalation to others. They can do this by reducing their day to day contact with people outside their household and their school bubble.

Yours sincerely



Mrs J McGuirk
Principal