

Monday 6th September 2021

Dear Parents, Carers and Students,

Welcome back to school everyone and to those of you who are new to our Trust, welcome to STAR, we are so pleased to have you with us!

The last few academic years have been hugely challenging for everyone in so many ways, but what has shone through has been our students – their courage, determination, resilience, love of learning..... This was so clearly demonstrated at both of our High Schools in mid-August when we saw years 11 and 13 celebrate glowing success in their GCSEs and A levels with so many personal stories of perseverance and triumph through adversity.

What has helped make this possible of course is the drive and passion of staff and parents working together, providing care and support in such challenging circumstances.

There is still so much to do though and later this month we will be sharing with you our Trust Strategic Plan not just for 2021/22, but the outline for the following two years as well because we know that ‘recovery’ at individual level is not a simple short-term challenge and our Trust mission is for *every individual*.

Hopefully this year, perhaps even this term, will allow for some degree of normality in educational life. At individual school level you will receive comprehensive detail on logistics which you need to bear in mind for your child, including the Covid-19 protocols for symptoms, testing and subsequent actions if anyone receives a positive test result.

At this point, I wanted to make you aware of a few Covid-19 related matters:

- Firstly and fundamentally, as a Trust we will ALWAYS undertake to deal with this matter sensitively and discreetly – we are only too aware of the number of families touched by personal tragedy and that pastoral need may yet surface with this regard
- We will also always respond rapidly to changes in local and national guidance to ensure safety and wellbeing remains our absolute priority throughout the coming academic year
- On our Trust and local school websites we have shared a precis of our comprehensive September Risk Assessment framework. All schools have completed site specific risk assessments using DfE guidance prior to opening this term, which include contingency planning for reduced numbers on site or re-implementation of ‘bubbles,’ neither of which of course we hope are again needed
- Face Coverings: the previous policy has now been removed. In line with DfE guidance, it is no longer deemed necessary to require staff, parents or students to wear face coverings on our Trust sites. However, at this time, we will fully support those who feel it is their preferred position to continue to wear face coverings, with the usual caveats in place for students about appropriate design and demeanour. Students using school transport are encouraged to continue to wear face coverings at this time
- Visitors: our school sites are now fully operable again and we are able to welcome visitors appropriately into school. However, whilst social distancing is no longer mandated, it is still preferred to reduce congestion and therefore email and telephone pre-booked appointments are preferred wherever possible. Please watch out for information and notices at individual school level

Please do contact your child’s individual school should you have any concerns or queries.

We are looking forward to a positive and successful year ahead now that we have all of our school communities back together again.

Kindest regards,

Ian Yapp
Chief Education Officer
The STAR Multi-Academy Trust

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