

14th October 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

As we approach half term, I would like to take this opportunity to say a huge well done to our NEST pupils for the way in which they have engaged with their learning this half term. We continue to have high levels of attendance and engagement across the Trust and our staff are really impressed with the way in which pupils have focused on their learning and embraced the exciting opportunities that have been reintroduced this half term. We really appreciate your support and commitment, often in difficult circumstances and whilst juggling a range of commitments.

During this half term, the number of Covid cases within our schools has started to rise and has resulted in schools needing to put in place measures from the Contingency Plan. This plan is published on the school website. For your information the thresholds for a Covid outbreak are:

- There are 5 positive cases amongst pupils or staff who are likely to have mixed closely within a 10-day period
- 10% of pupils or staff who are likely to have mixed closely test positive within a 10-day period

Any decision to introduce further Covid measures is agreed following discussions with Public Health England. We understand that decisions are sometimes made at short notice and want to thank parents and carers for supporting each school when any changes are made. Examples of these measures may be:

- Bubbles, to reduce mixing between groups
- Face coverings in communal areas and classrooms for staff and visitors (unless exempt)
- Staggered start and end times to the school day, ensuring each pupil receives the quantity and quality of education to which they are normally entitled
- Testing, including the use of an asymptomatic test site (ATS)

We may also need to limit:

- Residential educational visits – we have considered the potential financial impact of limiting a residential visit and the protection needed for this
- Open days – we will move to remote open days for potential parents and carers
- Transition or taster days
- Parents and carers coming into school - we will use remote parent/carers consultations
- Live performances

Please remember that we are reacting to a constantly changing situation and all our schools are working to ensure that pupils have full access to a curriculum that meets their needs. We are reliant on Track and Trace to inform Covid contacts whether they need to isolate and/or take a PCR test. Schools are no longer expected to share information regarding cases with parents and carers. We want to thank families for following the advice and guidelines issued.

Classes will only close following advice from Public Health England; this may be as a result of being unable to safely staff a class. Please note that it is particularly hard to recruit supply teachers currently. Leaders continue to review their risk assessments to ensure that they are providing safe school environments for pupils and staff. In addition, school staff continue to participate in the programme of lateral flow testing.

Thank you for continuing to work with our schools.

With very best wishes for a restful and safe half term break.

Yours faithfully,

Paula Farrow

CEO NEST