



Headteacher: **Ms Annemari Ottridge** M.Ed. NPQH NPQEL

29th January 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

With January 2021 almost gone and just two weeks before the half term break, it is time to review how Lonsdale students, staff and families are managing this ever-changing landscape. The pandemic continues to impact on our lives and it is fair to say we feel at a loss. It can feel hard to change the way we see our past and future lives at the moment and lots of us are struggling to make changes.

The perceptions and feelings of what we are experiencing are unique to us. But as long as we show empathy, kindness and compassion towards each other, we can get through this challenge.

Let have a look at some key updates:

Schools re-opening and the Government position

The most recent announcement from the Government about schools possibly returning in early March gives us some indication of what is to come. This is subject to the efforts we all are making to break the back of this pandemic by keeping our families and loved ones safe until the vaccination programme reaches the most vulnerable members of our society and all the NHS staff who work endlessly to look after those in need of clinical care.

Lonsdale School remains open to students and staff as long it is safe to do so. Our student and staff attendance is very good. We continue to risk assess our daily operations and the school staff feel fully supported by the Governing Board. The national average of students attending school varies.

'The latest national figures show that average attendance in special schools currently stands at approximately 30%. However, we also know that this overall average hides some significant geographical variation. We also know this remains higher than the national average in mainstream primary schools (20%) and mainstream secondary schools (5%)' (Paul Whiteman, NAHT, 28th January 2021).

Lonsdale School's attendance rate is **57.9%** and going up.

I would like to reassure you that we are working in partnership with our families to ensure that the most vulnerable and key worker children have priority access to face2face education onsite.

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 2019-2022

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Remote Education

I am delighted to see such a large number of children and young people attending their daily zoom sessions. The weekly Lonsdale Newsletter is full of great pictures of students' work and achievements. We understand the pressures families and parents are experiencing in supporting their children's remote learning. The most recent parent survey has helped us to understand the main barriers for learning and we are working with individual families to address these issues. We will be distributing IT devices, creative learning materials and other resources in the coming days.

If you have not completed the online survey, please do so. Thank you.

<https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/ParentSurveyRemoteLearningEquipmentBroadband/>

Please continue to participate in the live remote learning sessions. Continue to send in your child's work - it is important for your child to remain an active participant of their class group and the wider school community. Thank you for this too.

Residential Provision (REP) and Extended Learning Opportunities

The school and HCC officers are working closely together to plan a gradual opening of our extended learning offer (after school clubs and REP). This will be a gradual process and subject to national guidelines.

The REP facilities are currently being used to deliver daily education for our day students and this arrangement will continue until further notice.

We are planning to offer extended days, two evenings per week, from March onwards to those students, who are currently on roll for our residential provision. Overnight provision remains closed. Unfortunately, we are unable to receive new admissions, but we will endeavour to restart the application process in the summer term. More information to follow.

I would like to reassure you that the school and the Local Authority are committed to reopen the REP service, as soon it is safe to do so.

Lateral Flow Testing

We are currently offering Lateral Flow testing for all our staff and regular external agency staff twice a week in line with guidance.

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Half Term

The school will be closed for all pupils for February half term. We are curating content for you and your child to use on our website if you would like to access these activities. Please visit our website, thank you.

And finally, I want to say a big thank you to everyone in the Lonsdale community for their support over the past twelve months. Because we talk to each other, because we keep communicating, because we are a family, we have become strong and adaptable and I truly believe that our students are learning and growing day by day.

Soon we will see the first daffodils and the beginning of spring with the promise of much more to come.

Best wishes

Annemari Ottridge
Headteacher

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