

Learning for Life!



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

23rd February 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

We are delighted to be welcoming our students back to Lonsdale School on Monday, 8th March 2021, when the school reopens for all students after the national lockdown.

The PM's announcement yesterday has brought much needed clarity and direction for schools to plan an orderly reopening in the next 9 working days. We have been working during the lockdown constantly reviewing our plans and risk assessments in line with the Government and Public Health England advice and the most recently published guidance.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/963557/Additional_operational_guidance_for_special_schools_special_post-16_institutions_and_alternative_provision.pdf

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/963541/Schools_coronavirus_operational_guidance.pdf

The Lonsdale Governing Body will be meeting on Wednesday, 24th February and will review the most recently updated Whole School COVID-19 Risk Assessment. The full version will be available on the school website from Thursday, 25th February onwards for your information.

Return to school

I have picked up the main headlines for you below and hope that this information is helpful for you and your child when preparing for their return to school.

Attendance

From 8th March, school attendance is mandatory for all pupils and we welcome our students back to their bubbles. The school continues to have two bubbles (South and North bubbles) and your child will have the same arrangements in place as during the Autumn term.

Your child is expected to attend school fulltime and their timetable will remain the same. We are planning to make some small changes after Easter to encourage outdoor and forest school learning opportunities across all key stages.

Students who are self-isolating or shielding

The Government guidance is very clear for those individuals, who are identified as clinically extremely vulnerable. *'Students who are self-isolating because they are following public health advice should not attend school or college. Those pupils and students who are clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) are also*

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currently advised not to attend whilst shielding remains in place. Any pupils or students not attending their setting should receive remote education. (DfE, Feb 0201).

Your child is unable to attend school if they need **to self-isolate** because:

- have symptoms or have had a positive test result
- live with someone who has symptoms or has tested positive and are a household contact
- are a close contact of someone who has coronavirus (COVID-19)

This process remains the same as before in line with the Public Health Guidance.

Please could you provide us with a copy of your child's shielding letter to confirm that your child has been advised not to attend school.

Please note, that students who live with someone who is CEV, but who are not clinically extremely vulnerable themselves, should still attend school.

School transport

Your child's transport arrangements should remain the same as before and we will inform the HCC Transport team about the full opening of our school this week. The transport staff are wearing PPE and they should have access to weekly Lateral Flow Testing (LFT) as part of their role in supporting vulnerable children and young people.

Asymptomatic testing

We are very pleased to let you know that all Lonsdale staff members were offered COVID-19 vaccinations and a very large majority have received their first dose during the half term week. I hope that this is reassuring for you and you feel that your child is returning to a safer environment.

Lonsdale Staff members are tested twice a week onsite and after 8th March, we will transition to home testing for all staff.

Secondary students will have an opportunity to be tested on their return to school - as and when it is appropriate. Schools will have discretion on how to test students during the week commencing 8th March.

The DfE guidance recognise that special schools need greater flexibility when delivering testing. *'There will be a range of children and young people in these settings, and different approaches to testing will be needed. We have given specialist settings flexibility to be able to work with pupils/students and their families to agree the most appropriate way of them participating in twice-weekly testing'* (DfE, Feb 2021).

I will write to you in more detail how the student testing will be arranged onsite for the three onsite tests followed by weekly home testing.

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We appreciate how challenging this lockdown has been for your children and your families. We share some of your experiences, as a large majority of our staff members are working parents themselves managing their professional and family commitments during this unsettling time.

We cannot wait to have your child back in school to be reunited with their friends and to engage in face2face learning. We want to thank all parents and carers for their commitment to engage in their children's remote education during this lockdown. Your messages, photos of your children's work and Zoom session participation has helped your child to remain connected with their friends and their teaching team. Thank you.

I will send you further correspondence as the week progresses, so please continue to check your emails and the school website for more information. The school website has a wealth of information and resources to support your child's return to school. Please look at:

<https://www.lonsdale.herts.sch.uk/page/?title=Covid%2D19+Return+to+School&pid=161>

Thank you for your ongoing support to our school community and I look forward to seeing your child at school on Monday, 8th March.

My warmest wishes

Annemari Ottridge

Headteacher

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