31 December 2020

Dear parent/carer

I am writing to offer a summary of the recent announcements made by the government regarding the return of students to school/college in the New Year. This is of course an unusual time to receive a communication from your child’s school/college, but I know you will forgive that due to the unusual circumstances we are in. Our last communication on this explained the plan for week commencing 4th January; as that has now been changed, an interim letter is necessary.

**The overview**

* Our primary schools will return as normal, which (for pupils) is on the 5th January 2021.  Note:  There is an INSET Day on the 4th January 2021 for staff.
* For our secondary and post-16 institutions, the return date(s) are as follows:

**Week beginning 4th January 2021**

* Again noting that Monday 4th is an INSET Day i.e. no students attend, we will partially close (from Tue to Fri inclusive) to all but vulnerable students and the children of key workers.  These students will continue with face-to-face education, on site. In the case of vulnerable students, contact will have been made or will be made on Monday 4th January by their school; for children of critical workers, these students were identified in an earlier Trust communication just before Christmas. If you missed the chance to register before the break please do so urgently now using this link:

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=CCE9ruiSt0Cc_JtGPyH9N5dzpFbCRyJJubh_u1Yd4QlURDFDNExNVU8wTldRUTMwTUsxUUpQME1FUC4u>

* Examination year groups (Y11 and Y13) will be taught remotely.  **This is a compulsory aspect of their education.**
* Other year groups, Y7-10 and Y12, will also be able to access remote learning.  *Although for this week the government have said it is not compulsory for these year groups to do so,* we feel that it is imperative that as many students continue to engage with education as possible and expect all students to log onto live lessons through Microsoft Teams. They should follow their normal timetable.

**Week beginning 11th January 2021**

* As above re vulnerable students and children of critical workers.
* Examination groups (Y11 and Y13) **will also be on site, benefiting from face-to-face education.**
* Other year groups (Y7-10 and Y12) will be taught remotely.  **This is a compulsory part of their education.**

**Week beginning 18th January 2021**

* All students will be on site, benefiting from face-to-face education.  The only exceptions to this are a closed bubble and/or self-isolating pupils (where remote learning will be in place, similar to the process before Christmas).

*Note:  Any external examinations that are scheduled for w/b 04/01 and w/b 11/01 will take place as normal. Any students who has an external examination will be contacted directly by their school with further information.*

Also prior to Christmas, we explained that as a Trust we had signed up to pilot mass testing of staff, which will begin across our organisations from w/b 4th January. Furthermore, the government also intends to roll out mass testing for students in the new school term (which is why the return to school has been further staggered).  We have previously asked for consent from parents who would like their child(ren) to be part of this process (thank you to those who supported this), and we are currently planning how we facilitate it.

We hope to be in a position to offer mass Lateral Flow Testing (LFT) to students from the first week in January 2021.  However, these plans are not complete as yet, primarily due to factors outside of our control e.g. awaiting sufficient testing kits to be delivered on Monday 4th January. As soon as these plans are firmed up, they will be shared with you and other stakeholders.

I hope the above summary and update is helpful. More specific details will be forthcoming from each school in due course, but in the meantime please do not hesitate to contact your child’s school/college if you have a query regarding any aspect of it.

Finally, I would like to take the opportunity to wish you and your family a Happy New Year; one that promises us better times and a return to parental letters about such things as the importance of full school uniform…

Regards

Michael Gosling

CEO – Trinity Multi-Academy Trust