

CWA/LDA

12 May 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

Re: The Academy's COVID-19 Protocols from Monday 17 May 2021

I hope this latest update letter finds you and your respective families well.

Further to the Prime Minister's announcements during Monday afternoon's briefing with regards moving to Step 3 of the Government's roadmap out of restrictive measures, I would like to take this opportunity to clarify what this will mean for the stakeholders of Plume Academy as from next Monday. However, after reading this latest update letter, you'll see that from an education perspective, very little will actually change:

Face Coverings

Once again, there is a great deal of conflicting information in the media about this ongoing contentious matter, however, based on the latest DfE guidance received yesterday, please note the following with regards face coverings from next Monday:

- **Face coverings on the buses** – Compulsory*.
- **Face coverings on the corridors and moving between lessons** – Compulsory*.
- **Face coverings in lessons** – the latest DfE guidance states these do not have to be worn in lessons by students or staff as from next Monday, however, should any student or staff member wish to continue wearing them in class, they have my full support to carry on doing so.
- **Face coverings outside** – Optional.

**As has been the case throughout the pandemic period thus far, if you would like your child to continue to have a 'face covering exempt lanyard' or red pass, you will retain my full support for this to be the case. However, if you have not thus far but would like to discuss the possibility of this, please contact your child's Head/Assistant Head of Year in the first instance.*

Other Protective Measures to Issue a Reminder About

Social distancing – Whilst this remains very difficult with over 2000 stakeholders in the academy despite these numbers being spread across two campuses, as has been the case throughout this academic year thus far, students and staff should continue to social distance from each other where and whenever possible.

Ventilation - Indoor occupied spaces should remain well-ventilated during the working day and this means doors and windows will remain open across both campuses.

Sanitising – The academy will continue to have sanitiser in every teaching area as well as ensuring students continue to be met on each student entrance of both campuses with this as they enter the academy each and every day.

Antibacterial wipes and the wiping down of equipment after use – This was also done very well in both the Autumn term as well as after our last full return, however, despite the move to Step 3 of the Government's roadmap, the academy's team of staff, especially in the subjects of PE, IT, Food Technology and Music, will continue to proactively encourage students to wipe down the equipment they use after they have finished with

it and prior to the next class of students using it.

'Catch it, bin it, kill it' – Tissues will also remain in every classroom and when deemed necessary, our staff will encourage our students to use them followed by sanitising. However, as with the sanitiser and antibacterial wipes, your support in encouraging your child to have tissues on him/her would also be greatly appreciated. This is especially as we move into the main hay fever season.

Year group zones – In addition to having split campuses and students only being taught in their respective year groups, year group zones at break and lunch will remain in place until at least the Government's final Step 4 which is forecast to commence from 21 June 2021.

One way systems – These will also remain in place across both campuses at all times from 8:30am – 3:10pm and again, these have been extremely well adhered to thus far. These will remain in place to mitigate the risk of face-to-face contact and have also actually improved safe movement around the academy at the same time.

Forward-facing seating – This will also remain in place wherever possible and in the vast majority of our classrooms to reduce the amount and associated risk, albeit diminished, of face-to-face contact.

Enhanced cleaning – Our dedicated cleaning staff have continued to do a brilliant job throughout the pandemic and will, I know, only continue in such a manner moving forward. This will include our enhanced team of daytime housekeepers who work tirelessly throughout the entire day cleaning and wiping door handles, stair railings, toilets and light switches. They also deep clean any highlighted areas every time a student or staff member is identified as having potential COVID-19 symptoms and have to go home.

Uniform

Students will continue to be allowed to wear their Plume Academy PE kits on the days they have PE or Dance. This is so as to continue mitigating the risk posed by sometimes very large numbers changing in relatively small spaces with often poor ventilation. However, I do stress Plume Academy PE kit only as like many of you, I also believe they look smart and it can of course make those days easier from a parent/carer point of view. Therefore, as well as our own concerted efforts, your ongoing collaboration would be greatly appreciated in supporting us to achieve this, however, any students who opt not to adhere to what is being fairly requested here will have their right to wear non-academy uniform on the days they have PE or Dance withdrawn. Still, the vast majority have done exceptionally well with this since returning from the Easter break and I have every faith this will only continue as we progress through the Summer term.

The Academy's Lateral Flow Testing (LFT) Programme

For those of you who continue to opt into our LFT Programme, please note the following two points:

1. Your ongoing support in ensuring your child takes a test twice weekly with one being on a Sunday prior to the start of the working week would be greatly appreciated. On every occasion, these should then be uploaded to the National Test and Trace database, however, **if your child were to return a positive test, please contact me direct and via:**

C.Wakefield@plume.essex.sch.uk

2. Should you require top-up testing kits or have any LFT Programme related questions, do not hesitate to contact one of our LFT Programme Administrative Leads via:

Mrs McKelvie – S.McKelvie@plume.essex.sch.uk

Mrs Redfearn – A.Redfearn@plume.essex.sch.uk

COVID-19 Symptoms

This process remains exactly the same as it has been since the start of the academic year and that is if your child has any of the following symptoms, s/he must not come into the academy, self-isolate and book a PCR test via dialling 119 or the NHS website.

Whilst the following three main symptoms highlighted by the Department for Education and Public Health England remain the same, if at any point you have any doubt whatsoever with regards any symptoms your child is displaying, my continued advice would be to secure medical advice and guidance:

- a temperature of 37.8°C+ and feeling hot to touch on the chest or back;
- a **new**, continuous cough which means that there has been **three episodes of heavy coughing in a 24-hour period or one hour of persistent coughing**; and/or
- a **loss** of, or change in, the normal sense of taste and/or smell.

However, and to reiterate, as you, our parents and carers have done exceptionally well over the course of the past 14 months, please keep the academy updated with regards any tests and self-isolation protocols you and your respective families may well need to follow moving forward.

On behalf of our First Aid Administrators, even though this requirement has drastically reduced, nonetheless, we have also remained most appreciative of your support when they have called you to ask that you pick your child up if any of the three symptoms have developed whilst s/he was in the academy. We also have absolutely no doubt whatsoever that this support will only continue moving forward and for as long as is required.

Diarrhoea and Non-COVID-19 Related Symptoms

As a further polite reminder and as highlighted in many of my previous communications:

- if a child has sickness and/or diarrhoea, this may be a sign of many conditions, most of them infectious. Therefore, if at the academy, the student should go straight home and stay at home for two days longer than the sickness and/or diarrhoea lasts; and
- if a student has the symptoms of a common cold such as a runny nose, feeling under the weather etc. but does not have any of the three symptoms, the advice and guidance continues to state that they may come to school if the student's parent or carer feels s/he is well enough to do so. No COVID-19 self-isolation or test would need to be pursued either at this stage unless s/he developed one or more of the three main COVID-19 symptoms, however, and to reiterate, if ever you have any doubt, do look to seek medical advice and guidance.

Extra-Curricular Activities and Breakfast Clubs

Our campus Breakfast Clubs, PE and other Faculty areas' extra-curricular and enrichment programmes, primarily in singular year cohorts, will continue in full as we progress through the Summer term.

Trips and Visits

As well as day trips being allowed at present, from next Monday, domestic residential visits will also be able to occur and planning continues with regards both of these for a number of future events later in the Summer term.

Communicating with the Academy

Further to my numerous references to this in past communications, postings and meetings, should you have any concerns, issues or questions to raise or ask, I will continue to politely request that you raise them with the academy in the first instance.

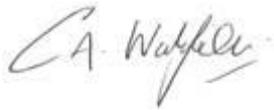
Email remains the preferred option with staff members contact email addresses being highlighted on the website in the 'Parents' tab.

For subject-related matters, please look to contact the respective class teacher in the first instance, with any pastoral-related matters needing to go through your child's Assistant Head of Year to start off with.

My colleagues will always look to get back to you as quickly as they possibly can but with over 1700 students in the academy, with many pre-booked meetings and matters that invariably manifest during the day to also respond to and manage, there can often be a delay in doing so. A number of colleagues also work part-time, therefore, do bear with us whilst being rest assured that the member of staff will get back to you as soon as s/he possibly can.

I will conclude by thanking you for taking the time to read this latest update letter, as well as in advance of your usual standard of support with the ongoing requests made of you and your children within it. However, by us all continuing to work in collaboration as well as in support of each other, I have every confidence we will safely and successfully work our way through the rest of the 2020-21 academic year.

Yours sincerely



Mr C A Wakefield
Executive Principal

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