



**Exceed Learning
Partnership**
Edlington Lane
Edlington
Doncaster
DN12 1PL

‘Innovative Education – Transforming Lives’

24th March 2021

Important Communication from the CEO:

Dear Parents, Carers and Guardians

As we are coming up to the end of the spring term I would like to give you an update from the Trust and our academies.

I am delighted that we have been able to welcome all pupils back into all our academies/school, it has been so lovely to see them. I am pleased to say that most pupils settled back into their normal daily routines quite quickly, however, we did have a very small number of pupils who were a little anxious to return, this was to be expected and staff members provided additional support and strategies to help these pupils adjust back into their learning.

I am extremely proud of the commitment and dedication shown by all our staff, both teaching and support staff, in order to adapt our learning to ensure that we build confidence in our pupils to meet their academic as well as their social and emotional needs.

Public Health Information: 18th March 2021

- **Doncaster has 122.2 cases per 100,000. This is a slight increase from previous week of 113.8 cases per 100,000. The average in England is currently 56.3**

This increase was expected, due to the reopening of schools. Although children are now mixing in schools, it is still important that they continue to follow the guidelines while they are out of school. Data does however suggest that the increase is not just due to schools, a lot of cases are in the 18 and 19 year olds and 20 to 29 year age group which may be due to their working environments.

Wider-opening arrangements in our Exceed Academies

All our academies and schools were recently visited by the Head of Health and Safety at North Yorkshire Council and the Trust received the following feedback which we would like to share with you:

‘I am just writing to you to compliment your schools, staff and pupils for the excellent covid practices I observed whilst visiting all the Exceed schools last week.

The arrangements that have been implemented, including drop off one way systems, extra staff rooms, face coverings in communal areas, signing in arrangements etc. are the best examples of covid secure arrangements I have seen so far. They really are exemplary and huge credit must be given to everyone involved'

As always, we continue to review and update our risk assessments throughout the Trust ensuring that we are following the latest guidance provided. The health and safety of our pupils and staff remain our priority.

Weekly testing of Employees:

As you are aware employees throughout our Trust including catering and cleaning staff have been undertaking twice weekly lateral flow testing since January and I can confirm that we will continue to undertake these tests and report our results over the Easter period and into the summer term in line with advice from the DfE. As you are aware these tests are not 100% guaranteed, however it does provide a further protective measure to support our staff, during these difficult times, to continue education for our pupils.

Bubble Closures:

I am extremely pleased to inform you that we continue to maintain a high level of staffing throughout and we have only had to close 3 bubbles across all 5 academies/schools. I would like to thank parents/carers and pupils who were part of a bubble closure for their understanding and support during this period.

I would like to also thank parents/carers for adhering to the following procedures that we have implemented whilst dropping off and collecting your child/ren from school.

- only one person (if possible) should escort their child to and from the academy/school to reduce numbers on academy/school premises
- parents/carers are asked not to congregate around the academy /school gates/entrances or on the outside footpaths after drop off or pick up times
- parents should contact the academy by email or phone to communicate any information and not attend the academy office
- Parents/carers should arrive at the academy at the allocated time slot
- The wearing of face coverings on academy/school premises

Contact Tracing over the Easter Period

Parents/carers are asked to notify their academy/school if their child receives a positive case or, where their child has developed symptoms within 48 hours of last being in school. These cases should be reported through to the academy/school Covid alert email address below up until Thursday 1st April.
alerts@hilltop.doncaster.sch.uk

For anyone displaying any symptoms or receiving a positive result following the 1st April please arrange for a Covid PCR test to be undertaken and follow the NHS Test and Trace contact tracing instructions.
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-and-tracing/>

Changes from the 29th March

As part of the governments roadmap out of lockdown the rules are expected to change from 29th March, however these will only be implemented if they are happy that the criteria has been met.

From the 29th March:

- you will be able to **meet outdoors either in a group of 6** (from any number of households), or in a group of any size from up to 2 households (each household can include existing support bubbles, if eligible)
- **Social distancing still applies**
- **No mixing indoors** - Please do not have sleepovers, or visit each other's homes unless you are part of an existing support bubble.
- **Minimise travel**

For more information regarding the roadmap out of lockdown please visit:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-response-spring-2021/covid-19-response-spring-2021-summary?priority-taxon=774cee22-d896-44c1-a611-e3109cce8eae>

From 1st April, if you have been identified as clinically extremely vulnerable you will no longer be advised to shield, however, you should continue to take extra precautions to protect yourself. It is important that you continue to keep the number of social interactions that you have to the minimum.

Test and Trace Support Payment for Parents

Parents/carers of children who have been advised to self-isolate by their schools or NHS Test and Trace may be eligible to receive a Test and Trace support payment or discretionary payment of £500 if they meet all the following eligibility criteria.

- They are the parent or guardian of a child or young person in the same household and need to take time off work to care for them while they self-isolate. This is limited to one parent or guardian per household for the child or young person's self-isolation period.
- They are employed or self employed
- They cannot work from home while undertaking caring responsibilities and will lose income as a result.
- They meet all the other means-tested eligibility criteria for a Test and Trace Support Payment or locally discretionary criteria for a discretionary payment.
- they are currently receiving or are the partner of someone in the same household who is receiving, at least one of the following benefits:
 - Universal Credit
 - Working Tax Credit
 - income-based Employment and Support Allowance
 - income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
 - Income Support
 - Housing Benefit
 - Pension Credit

If parents/carers are not in receipt of one of these benefits, they could be eligible for a £500 discretionary payment if all the following apply:

- they meet all the other criteria listed above
- they are on a low income
- they will face financial hardship as a result of self-isolating

Applications for the Test and Trace Support Payment scheme are made via the local authority in which the parent/carer lives and not the local authority where the school setting is situated. For more information please visit <https://www.gov.uk/test-and-trace-support-payment>

Free School Meals

For families who are in receipt of free school meals, academies will be issuing vouchers for the Easter period, via the Wonde system direct to parent/carer. Please note vouchers will be issued for a total 8 days as Good Friday and Easter Monday are excluded.

Finally, I would like to express my sincere thanks for your continued support over the past months in helping us to achieve our wider opening plans. We should all feel immensely proud of what has been achieved so far and what we will continue to achieve. It is a great privilege to lead this Trust and to work with our communities. There is no limit to what we can achieve and no greater investment that we can make, in the lives of all our children.

I wish you all a very happy Easter break. Please remember that it is important that we continue to follow all government guidance and national restrictions to ensure that we are keeping our families, communities and others safe.

Yours sincerely,

B.A Nixon

Mrs B.A Nixon
CEO

Mr John Blount
Chair of Directors Board

