



# THE THOMAS LORD AUDLEY SCHOOL

Part of The Sigma Trust

*Headteacher: Helena Boast BA MEd*

6 November 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

Further to the Prime Minister's announcement that from 5th November England has entered an initial four-week "lockdown", I am writing to update you about implications in school and a number of other important matters.

## **DfE Guidance for schools** (published 4 November)

As a consequence to how effective our arrangements have been in school since we returned in September and adjustments that were made in schools when Essex went into "Tier 2 - High Alert" status, this latest guidance does not provide us with any substantial further changes to make. The school remains open and students should attend school unless they are unwell or they or a member of their household displays any of the Coronavirus symptoms and/or test positive for Coronavirus.

## **Staffing**

The National Restrictions that are now in place mean that some members of society have been told they should take increased caution and in some cases not attend work. Staff members who are deemed by the NHS to be "Clinically Extremely Vulnerable" (CEV) will not attend work and will work from home. This is to keep CEV colleagues as safe as possible and to help protect the NHS. A second group of staff, "Clinically Vulnerable" (CV) will have individual risk assessments completed and it might be necessary for us to alter their usual working arrangements. Although we do not currently expect there to be any significant impact on the number of staff available to work caused by these changes for CEV and CV colleagues, we are aware that there are increasing instances of people testing positive for Coronavirus and this could impact our staffing levels. Whilst we will endeavour to do everything we can to avoid this situation, if staffing levels fall below a particular amount, then we will have to introduce partial closures. This would most likely involve one or more year groups being told to not attend school and to work remotely. Please see previous correspondence about remote learning and the support that we have available for this.

## **Wet Weather**

We are moving into the time of year that it is increasingly likely that we will face inclement weather. Please remind your child to prepare for poor weather. On Tuesday this week we had a lot of rain just as students were arriving to school, several students arrived without a coat and consequently got very wet in the rain. As a result of the arrangements in school students no longer have their PE kits in their bag or their locker to change if they get wet, which would have ordinarily been a good solution to such a problem. It is therefore necessary to be prepared in a different way. This should include bringing a coat to school everyday and where possible bringing a change of clothes in their bags. If students bring a change of clothes, it is advised that this is kept in a plastic bag to prevent these clothes also getting wet.

**Attendance**

We are aware that some families will be concerned about the increased number of cases of positive Coronavirus outbreaks. The DfE guidance states that schools are not required to provide remote learning work for students who do not attend school because of a decision to isolate themselves rather than being instructed to do so because they are "Clinically Extremely Vulnerable" or because they or a member of their household displays symptoms and/or tests positive Coronavirus. The school will follow-up with families about the reasons for non-attendance.

**Parents' Evenings**

We are aware that it is highly unlikely that we will be able to have our usual face-to-face parents' evenings that normally form part of our school events calendar. We have made arrangements that we will be able to host virtual parents' evenings this academic year.

On Thursday 19th November we will have our first virtual parents' evening for Year 7 parents and carers. We normally have an evening for Year 7 parents in the Autumn term to provide parents and carers with an opportunity to meet with their child's tutor. The introduction of the virtual parents' evenings should mean that this can still be arranged and we will write to Year 7 parents and carers early next week to provide more information and details about how to book and attend an appointment online.

**Progress Reports**

The restrictions on our usual teaching practices that are currently in place in order to reduce the risk of spreading the Coronavirus in school as much as possible, means that teaching practice has had to adapt. We are developing our approaches to assessment and we will be sharing progress information with parents and carers later this term. We are currently collecting report information for Year 11 students and we hope to make this available via Go4schools towards the end of next week. For all other year groups, data will be provided to parents and carers towards the end of this half-term.

**Monitoring Students**

We will be conducting a number of monitoring activities in the next few weeks, including the checking of bags, to ensure the safeguarding of our students. This is in response to some concerns that have been raised in the local area regarding the behaviours of some young people.

We are aware that the current national restrictions will be providing each of us with different challenges. Our students' well-being is our top priority. If your circumstances at home change significantly and you think this will have an impact on your child, please do let us know. We have a very experienced pastoral team as well as access to counselling support that we can deploy to help our young people.

Following the half-term break, the students have returned to school really well and the vast majority of them are approaching their lessons with enthusiasm. This is very pleasing and shows that they are resilient and determined young people; we are very proud of them.

Yours sincerely



Mr S Essex

Deputy Headteacher