



27th November 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

Autumn Term 2020

I thought it would be useful to write to all families across the Trust, now that we have only three weeks before the end of term, and in advance of the changes to national restrictions. I would like to begin by thanking you for your support since the full reopening of our academies at the beginning of September, and for the ways you have helped your child to return successfully to full time learning in school.

We have had a small number of positive cases in some – but not all – of our academies this term. In each instance we have identified the *close contacts* of the confirmed case who have then self-isolated, and let the wider community know of the situation in order to make sure everyone is vigilant for the virus; if you have not been informed of a positive case in your academy that is because there have been none so far. At all times we have acted on the instructions of local and national health experts and followed the guidance set out by the government. At no point have we needed to send more than a clearly identified group of young people into self-isolation, and I hope that this will continue through the winter. However, the only way we can achieve this is if everyone continues to be vigilant and acts in the ways that have helped to keep everyone safe so far, namely:

- i. Do not send your child into school if s/he has any one of the symptoms of coronavirus:
 - a. a high temperature (this means they feel hot to touch on their chest or back)
 - b. a new, continuous cough (this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or three or more coughing episodes in 24 hours – if they usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)
 - c. a loss of, or change in, their normal sense of smell or taste (this means they cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal).
- ii. Follow rigorously the government restrictions for your area. All of our families in Crawley and Croydon will be in Tier 2 from Wednesday 2nd December; you can find out more [here](#) on what this means for you. It is important that families understand these restrictions and respond accordingly. I would like to emphasise the first two restrictions under which we shall all be living in Tier 2, with the following taken directly from government guidance:
 - you must not socialise with anyone you do not live with or who is not in your support bubble in any indoor setting, whether at home or in a public place
 - you must not socialise in a group of more than 6 people outside, including in a garden or a public space – this is called the ‘rule of 6’
- iii. If you bring your child to school in person or collect at the end of the day, do not mix closely with other parents and families; always wear a face mask where necessary and maintain social distancing.
- iv. If your academy contacts you to let you know your child has been a *close contact of a confirmed case*, then keep your child in self-isolation for the remainder of the required period and monitor carefully for symptoms of the virus.
- v. Think carefully about mixing with other households over Christmas. We know that the government will relax the restrictions outlined in Tier 2 for a short period over the upcoming holiday, but we also know

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the increased risks involved in mixing with people that you do not live with. The government has published advice on how to keep safe during the period when restrictions are eased; you can find that information [here](#). Do ensure that if any members of your household develop symptoms of the virus, in advance or as a result of Christmas mixing, you follow the instructions given in the table attached to the letter I previously wrote to parents that you can access [here](#).

However, we know that even by following all these protocols rigorously, there is always a chance that the virus could be brought into one of our academies and transmitted to others. Should this happen we shall make sure we continue to communicate promptly with those families that need to act.

This requirement to communicate with you will continue over the Christmas break. If there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 during the early part of the holiday, and the individual has been in the academy 48 hours before symptoms developed, then you need to let us know about it; in that event, we will then need to let other close contacts know, which will require self-isolation over the holiday period. Therefore, if your child develops symptoms of the virus on Saturday 19th December or Sunday 20th December, please email the academy immediately with:

- the date when symptoms started
- the last date that s/he attended school
- confirmation that a coronavirus test is booked or has already been taken

If the result of the test is positive, please send to us the official notification as soon as you receive it so that we can act accordingly.

Communications with us over Christmas about COVID-19 should be to the following email addresses, to the relevant academy your child attends:

Courtwood Primary	admin@courtwood.org.uk
Gilbert Scott Primary	admin@gilbert-scott.org
Gossops Green Primary	office@gossopsgreen.org.uk
Waterfield Primary	office@waterfield.org.uk
Riddlesdown Collegiate	admin@riddlesdown.org
The Quest Academy	office@thequestacademy.org.uk

Your academy leaders will write to you further before Christmas with further details on the end of term and reminders about responding to COVID-19. I know this will continue to be an anxious time for families and communities, but I hope the promising news on vaccines may allow us to return to some degree of normality later in 2021. I look forward to the final three weeks of term being as successful in our academies as the term has been so far. Although it may be a little early to do so, let me wish you a very happy and safe Christmas and New Year holiday.

Yours sincerely



Mr Gordon Smith
Chief Executive