

30 June '20

Dear Parents/Carers:

We're now in our third week of operating the rota system that has been in place for students in years 10 and 12. Staff have really enjoyed seeing the students back in school and the students themselves have remarked how much they have appreciated the opportunity to meet up with each other and their teachers – albeit at a distance. Importantly, the social distancing and hygiene measures that have been put in place have been followed well, and so we have been able to provide the environment that the risk assessment / action plan was designed to create.

Since the risk assessment was drawn up, there have been several changes to national guidance on social distancing, including (from 4 July) a change from the 'two metre rule' to a 'one metre plus rule'. However, it's important to note that the official advice is still that two metre social distancing should still be observed, where possible. Taking into account the timing of these changes and the provisions that have been made on site, it seems sensible to keep the same expectations and arrangements in place for the remaining two to three weeks of the term, and so we are not changing our on-site set-up and protocols at this time.

Within our risk assessment, we identified a specific risk that a student who lives with a clinically extremely vulnerable person could pass the virus onto them as a result of coming onto the school site. For this case, we judged that stringent social distancing would need to have been established, with a high degree of confidence in the degree of compliance, over a period of at least two weeks. On the basis of an evaluation conducted by the senior leadership team, we have concluded that eligible students (i.e. those who are in Year 10, Year 12, are the children of key workers or are considered vulnerable) in this position are now able to attend. Please note that, consistent with Government guidelines, students who themselves are shielding still cannot attend school at this time.

You may also be aware that the Government has announced its intention that all students return to school from the beginning of September, although there is some contention over whether, or not, this will be on a full-time basis. There has been further media speculation this morning in relation to leaked Government documents relating to secondary schools teaching students in 'bubbles' – to curb the spread of the virus and support the 'Test and Trace strategy. We await detail on these plans. At present, I am unable to provide any clarity on the model of provision that we will need to develop, ready for September, in order to work in a way that is consistent with Government guidelines and that will keep members of the school community safe. When proper guidance becomes available, I will make sure that you are kept informed and give you our thoughts on how we would look to make practical arrangements. I am anticipating that we may need to plan for, and adapt to, different scenarios, as the COVID-19 pandemic waxes and wanes over the coming weeks.

Finally, I would like to clarify the position in relation to the summer break. We have put full-time provision in place for the children of key workers and for other specified students and this has run, in these exceptional times, during the Easter and half-term break periods. We do not, however, plan to run this programme through the Summer Term, judging that all members of the school community are going to need a break (and consistent with Government advice and expectations).

Thank you once again for your ongoing support, including feedback on the online work programme. We have had lots of very positive comments and have been making continuous improvements to our approach, based on comments from parents/carers and students. I am grateful to the teaching and support staff for their flexibility and professionalism in these difficult times.

As members of the Chase Terrace Academy community – staff and students alike - we have missed being able to work together face-to-face and day-to-day – teaching, learning, supporting each other and enjoying each other's company. Let's hope that we are soon able to return to a sense of normality.

Best wishes – stay safe.

Stuart Jones
Executive Headteacher