

19 May '21

Dear Parent(s)/Carer(s):

As we continue to navigate our way through the pandemic, following the Government's 'Roadmap', we're hoping that there's cause for continued optimism. The vaccination programme has clearly been effective in reducing transmission and serious illness, but the potential for 'variants' of the virus to create infection 'spikes' is also apparent, given the recent increased incidence in some parts of the country. The Government's recent announcements continue to stress the need for social distancing, when not with people in your 'bubble', using outside, open spaces wherever possible and continuing to keep up high standards of hygiene - 'hands, face, space and fresh air'. Following the communication from school last week, which highlighted the changes we were making at school, consistent with the new Government guidelines, we have now updated, in detail, the COVID-19 Risk Assessment and Action Plan and a revised (linked) Social Distancing and Infection Control Policy. These are posted on the school's website. If you have any comments, or recommendations, then please let us know. Given the rate at which we are required to respond to the new guidance, we are needing to view consultation as a continuous process and will always be pleased to receive any feedback or suggestions you may have.

The key changes relate to: the use of face masks; extra-curricular activity and educational visits; performing arts and sports; and contingency planning (actions that are required, where further restrictions are necessary). In short, students are no longer required to wear face coverings in lessons (although we have taken the position that they should be allowed to do so, if they wish). Also, there is now more flexibility for planning performing arts events and for competitive sports. Educational trips (with appropriate controls) are allowed, other than international trips (subject to review in September).

We are now in the closing stages of final assessments for students in years 11 and 13, and so students in these year groups will soon have some respite from what has been quite an intensive period of work. In these very difficult circumstances, with the formal exam season cancelled due to the pandemic, we have done our very best to make the process as fair as possible and to avoid putting undue pressure on cohorts of students who found themselves in a very difficult position. It is important that these students have a plan for the future and we have aimed to ensure that each of these young people has a clear destination – into sixth form, college, university, an apprenticeship or securing a job with training. The workplace is highly competitive at present and we want Chase Terrace Academy students to be well positioned and to be able to make good choices. We would advise anyone who is not yet clear about their future (pending finalisation of their grades) to get a further appointment with Mrs Poppleton, our Director of Careers Guidance, either directly (J.Poppleton@chaseterraceacademy.co.uk), or through the relevant year office.

Finally, some really good news. Each year, we submit bids to secure grants to develop the school's premises. As much of the school is still relatively new, we have not enjoyed much success, as there are schools that are in greater need and there is a limited amount of financial support available. However, some of the school's accommodation is old and heating and maintaining these areas is increasingly uneconomical. We had already made plans to use some of the school's reserves for some improvement projects (updating changing rooms and toilets), but I am also delighted to report that it was confirmed, last week, that we have been successful in securing £840,000 of funding (through the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme). This will enable us to update heating systems, insulation and lighting and will result in significantly less expensive running costs and a much smaller 'carbon footprint'. The work is planned to take place next academic year. We would like to recognise the huge efforts of Mr Cooper, Ms. Morgan and Mrs Thorp in putting the bid together (and several other unsuccessful bids that established our intent) and managing it through the approval process.

Once again, thank you all for support you have provided to the school and its community, by assisting us when we have needed to make changes, and for your patience and understanding when decisions have had to be made at relatively short notice.

Best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stuart Jones', with a large, sweeping flourish extending from the bottom right.

Stuart Jones

Executive Headteacher

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nicola Mason', with a long, wavy flourish extending to the right.

Nicola Mason

Head of School