



## Northern Ambition Academies Trust

Crewe Road, Airedale, Castleford WF10 3JU – Tel: 01977 664555 – Fax: 01977 664556

Date: 26/03/2021

Dear Parents/Carers

It gives me great pleasure to be able to report to you what a fantastic and positive start all of our schools have seen since their full reopening on the 8<sup>th</sup> March. I have visited all schools and have tried my best to speak to all pupils and staff. I have been impressed at just how resilient your children and our staff are – they have come back smiling and generally, raring to go. It is a pleasure to have them back. Although a little long, this letter includes a number of key messages and important information for parents, carers and pupils.

### **Easter Holidays**

Our schools will be closed to all pupils during the Easter break, but we have been asked by the Department for Education, to continue with contact tracing over this period, similar to the arrangements in place over Christmas. You only need to inform the school if your child/children test positive for Covid-19 where the child developed symptoms within 48 hours of being in school. If your child shows symptoms or tests positive outside of this timeframe, you are not required to take any action but should follow contact tracing instructions provided by NHS Test and Trace.

### **Summer Term – Standards and Expectations**

Although it feels like we have just welcomed our young people back, we will look forward to welcoming them back yet again after the Easter break, on Monday 12<sup>th</sup> April. As always though, it is really important that parents/carers and pupils are reminded of the very high standards expected of them when in school, and that we all get back on track with these expectations as quickly as possible.

### **Attendance**

The government has made it very clear that **attendance to school is now mandatory for all pupils**. The usual rules and duties around school attendance are therefore in place across the Trust. So far, all schools are reporting good attendance which is positive news and I ask you all to keep this going. Lockdown and school closure has shown just how important school is to the lives of young people, not just from an academic point of view, but from a social and emotional point of view as well. Seeing friends and staff, socialising and communicating with each other are key elements of growing up. Many of our children have missed this whilst away from school but we now look forward. We have them back and it is wonderful!

### **Uniform**

Over the last 4 years, we have worked incredibly hard to ensure all of our pupils are wearing their school uniform smartly and with pride. We are keen to maintain these high standards and be proud of seeing our pupils arrive at and leave school in full uniform. However, we appreciate that time away from school undoubtedly means that many children may have grown out of some elements of their uniform. We are all hoping that shops will reopen from the 12<sup>th</sup> April and I would encourage you to please ensure your child has all they need to be equipped and dressed for school. Please do contact your child's school directly if you need support with this.

### **Behaviour**

As I have mentioned above, it is a pleasure to have our pupils back in school. The vast majority have quickly fallen back into school routine and understand exactly what is expected of them. Your support is more important than ever in ensuring your child/children uphold our high standards of behaviour, and core value of RESPECT on their way to school, during the school day and on their way home. It is hugely rewarding when I receive positive messages from staff and/or members of the public about the conduct of any of our pupils, but hugely disappointing and concerning when messages received are negative. This reflects not only on the pupils and their families but on the school they attend and the Trust as a whole.

### **Attitudes to Learning**

My key message to our Headteachers as we reopened our doors to all pupils, was to please keep focussed on the positives! After a year of worry and negativity, it is absolutely vital that we keep our pupils upbeat and resilient. Some pupils may well be behind after a considerable amount of time out of school, but I have said before, children are incredibly resilient and many have actually thrived with our remote education provision. Our staff will do all they can to make sure that your children make up for lost learning. We believe that this is very achievable but we need all of our

pupils to believe this too. They need to have the right mind-set, a positive attitude to their learning and to put 100% effort into all they do, that way they will quickly plug any gaps they may have. Your support with this message will be key.

### **Pupil Well-being**

This has been a difficult time for some pupils. I believe that for the majority, being back at school with their peers will be all the support they need, but for some, they may need additional help. Your child's school will do all it can to support your child if they need it and if you require anything from us that may help you support at home, please do get in touch.

### **Safety outside of our schools**

Can I please ask that parents and carers consider their parking when dropping off and picking up children from our schools? We have asked local police to support us with this and to ensure the safety of our pupils and the general public. We hope that this increased police presence shows the seriousness of this message and the current increased risk of accidents due to poor and unsafe parking. It would also be very helpful if parents and carers of children who choose to cycle or scoot to school, remind them of road safety and do not cycle or scoot in such a manner that puts their or others safety at risk.

### **Changes to the Test and Trace support payment for parents**

Parents and carers of children who have been advised to self-isolate by their school or by NHS Test and Trace are now able to apply for a Test and Trace Support Payment or discretionary payment of £500, if they meet the eligibility criteria. The extension of the Test and Trace Support Payment scheme ensures that parents receive the financial support they need if they are unable to attend work due to childcare responsibilities.

Parents and carers should apply to the local authority to receive a payment. Applications for the Test and Trace Support Payment scheme are made via the local authority in which the parent or carer lives, not the local authority where the school is situated, if these are different.

To be eligible applicants must meet all of the criteria that:

- *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 determined criteria for a discretionary payment*

*That their child or young person:*

- *is aged 15 or under (or 25 or under with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHC)) and normally attends an education or childcare setting*
- *has been told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace or by their education or childcare setting because they have been identified as a close contact of someone who has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19)*

The school will be required to provide a letter to all parents or carers of the children advised to self-isolate, to support an application to the Test and Trace Support Payment scheme. Parents or carers will then be able to provide this letter to their local authority as evidence that your child is required to self-isolate. Once an application for a payment has been received, the local authority will be in touch with the school to verify the details of the child provided on the application. This will include a check of the child's name, age, address and days of self-isolation. This check is to minimise the event of fraudulent claims. It may be conducted before or after a payment is made, depending on the arrangements the local authority has chosen to put in place.

### **Airedale Academy only**

#### **Ofqual consultation on the autumn exam series (September to December 2021)**

Ofqual is seeking views on how an autumn exam series for GCSEs should run this year, in a consultation published on Wednesday 17 March. They are keen to hear from students on their proposals, which include:

- the autumn series being open to any student who entered or who had intended to enter exams this summer
- grades being determined by a student's exam performance only
- students being able to use the better of the summer or autumn grade
- the use of the normal reviews of marking and appeal arrangements

The consultation follows the cancellation of GCSEs, AS and A level exams this summer because of the coronavirus pandemic. When the government set out its policy on how grades would be awarded it also confirmed it wanted students to have the opportunity to take exams in the autumn.

The consultation will be open until Friday 9 April 2021 and I would encourage Y10 students especially to take part and have their say by following [this link](#).

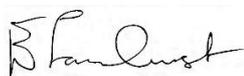
**Wakefield's proposed Post 16 Transport policy – FAO Y11, 12 & 13 students**

Whilst Wakefield is not proposing any changes to their Post 16 Transport Policy for 2021/2022, they would still welcome feedback on the proposed policy. The proposed policy sets out the LA's criteria for determining eligibility for assistance with travel for young people aged 16-18 and for young people aged 19-24 with Special Educational Needs and/or Disability. The consultation opened on Monday 22 March 2021 and closes on Friday 16 April 2021. Please follow <https://www.airedaleacademy.com/images/media/doc/post-16-transport-policy-2021-2022-v1-1.pdf> to gain access to the policy should you wish to read it and make comment.

Finally, I will take this opportunity to once again thank you for your ongoing support for your child's school and our Trust. It is hugely appreciated. I can assure you that all schools continue to do all they can to keep their staff and pupils safe and that our staff continue to work incredibly hard to ensure your children receive a quality education. We do though look forward to the day all government restrictions are lifted!

Have a happy Easter and please continue to take care,

Yours faithfully,



**Elizabeth Fairhurst**  
*Chief Executive*  
Northern Ambition Academies Trust