

Our Ref: CW/DC

All Sandwell Parents and Carers

1st March 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

Firstly, thank you for the support you have shown to your children and our schools during the latest lockdown period. Your efforts to keep children safe and to also educate them at home has been really appreciated.

As you will know, the Government announced that schools will begin to fully reopen to all pupils from 8 March. This will mean that it is once again mandatory for all children to attend school unless they are Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV) and have been advised to stay at home.

This week, schools are preparing their plans for full reopening and some will be taking a phased approach to the return of all children. This will allow pupils to settle into school again and, for Secondary age children, will allow for schools to conduct rapid testing of pupils without symptoms in years 7 to 13.

Each school will have a different approach to the phased return of pupils and they will write to you separately to explain this. This will include any wraparound care service they may offer.

We know that children are very keen to get back to school and their teachers will be equally happy to return to face to face teaching. However, schools will continue to have to operate all control systems to keep children and staff as safe as possible.

If you have a Secondary age child you will know that there is a strong recommendation that they wear a face covering in class as well as in communal areas. We ask that you support this and the rapid testing programme to help reduce transmission of the virus.

[IL1: PROTECT]

Chris Ward, Director of Education, Skills and Employment
EDUCATION, SKILLS AND EMPLOYMENT DIRECTORATE

Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council, The Council House, Oldbury, West Midlands, B69 3DE

All children are still required to self-isolate if they or their family have Covid-19 symptoms (a new continuous cough, temperature or changes or loss in taste and smell) or test positive.

If you are collecting or dropping off children from school, we would ask that you continue to follow social distancing rules and wear a face covering in areas where many people are gathered.

If your child is travelling to and from school on their own, please remind them of the need to maintain social distancing rules, and to be mindful that lockdown laws are still in place. This is for their own safety and wellbeing.

Schools and Neighbourhood Police Officers and Police Community Support Officers will be patrolling in and around all schools to engage with children where necessary. If your child has any fears or concerns please direct them to the www.fearless.org website.

We hope that plans to reintegrate all children into school life go smoothly; however, if you or your children need assistance or reassurance I know that our schools will be keen to help.

Finally, we have developed an online survey so that we can hear from parents and children about the reopening of schools to all children. It will help us to understand what works well for families. The online survey is now open and can be found at www.sandwell.gov.uk/backtoschool . The closing date for responses is Friday 5 March.

Yours sincerely



Chris Ward
Director of Education, Skills and Employment

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