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Date: 1 March 2021

Dear Parent/carers

Ref: Full reopening of PLC from Monday 8th March 2021

As you are no doubt aware, the UK Government has announced the full reopening of all schools from Monday 8th March 2021. This letter is to confirm arrangements for the full reopening of Pathways Learning Centre (PLC). I have tried to keep this letter as brief as possible, whilst including all the essential information. This may mean that for some parents you would like more detail, so please do not hesitate to get in touch if you have any questions.

Returning to school

All PLC students will return to school on Monday 8th March 2021. Unless specific arrangements have been made with you, this will mean a return to the programme students were following prior to lockdown coming into place (ie. Programmes as they were at the end of Term 2). For most students this is either back to full time provision on site, off site programmes, or home tuition.

Transport

If your child is entitled to transport, this will be reinstated from Monday 8th March at the usual pick up / drop off times.

Risk assessment

We are constantly reviewing our Covid 19 risk assessment and the risk reduction measures in place to keep everyone safe. For those interested, the details of our risk assessment can be found on the PLC website under the parent information tab. However, two key changes need to be highlighted ahead of students' full return on Monday 8th March.

1. Face masks
2. Twice weekly asymptomatic testing of students

Relationships

Respect



Empathy

Perseverance

1. Face masks

In addition to wearing face masks in communal areas such as corridors, **secondary age students are required to wear face coverings in classrooms and during activities.** Initially this is for a period up to the end of Term 4.

- **This does not apply :**
 - in situations where wearing a face covering would impact on the ability to take part in exercise or strenuous activity, for example in PE lessons.
 - to students who are exempt from wearing face coverings on medical grounds or due to their specific needs. However, we ask that parents continue to communicate updated information with PLC staff regarding these requirements.
 - To primary age pupils who not expected to wear face coverings.
- **This does apply** to students who are receiving education via home tuition.

Please speak to students about this requirement and please provide students with a mask to wear in school, or for their learning session. Students who forget their mask, or do not have one, will be provided with a mask to wear.

2. Asymptomatic testing (using Lateral Flow Tests - LFT)

You will probably also be aware that the Government has asked schools to help break the chains of Covid 19 transmission by encouraging as many staff and secondary age students, without Covid symptoms (asymptomatic), to be tested for Covid 19 on a regular basis. Since the start of January 2021, PLC staff have been tested on site every week and some students who have been on site have also been tested. We have carried out over 600 tests in that time and all tests carried out so far have been negative.

As more students return on Monday 8th March, we will be carrying out on site testing of secondary age students using the LFT process that we are already familiar with. **Primary pupils do not need to be tested.**

On site testing of more students

All secondary students on site and those receiving home tuition, are requested to complete twice-weekly Covid 19 testing using the LFT process. Initially, this will mean parents/carers providing consent for students to be tested on site. **If you have not already completed the consent form and you would like your child to be included in the voluntary testing process, please click on and complete the consent link below** (Link 1). A privacy notice (Link 2) is also provided for your information, to clarify how any personal information will be used.

Once consent has been received, **students will be tested on site on 3 occasions, 3 to 5 days apart.** This is so students have undertaken some testing in a supervised setting, and have had the chance to familiarise themselves with self-swabbing.

Key links:

1. [Consent to testing form](#)
2. [Privacy notice information](#)
3. Video - [Step by step guide to COVID-19 self-testing - YouTube](#)
4. [A step by step visual guide on how to do a LFT home test](#)
5. [An introduction to rapid self-testing](#)

Home testing

After the third on site test, students will be provided with home testing kits, so twice weekly testing can continue at home (See below for Home Tuition student arrangements). We ask for your support in helping students carry out the tests at home. It is helpful if this can take place on a Sunday night or Monday morning, before starting a new school week, and then carry out the second test on Wednesday night or Thursday morning. This cycle can then be repeated each week. The test take about 5-10 minutes to complete, but you do have to wait 30 minutes for the test result to come through before recording the result on line. You will also need to inform PLC of the result and more information will follow on how to do this. The process is very straight forward and a simple video (Link 3) and introduction to testing guides (link 4 and 5) are provided in the list above.

For most students, home testing will not need to begin until Wednesday 17th March or Monday 22nd March, after the completion of the three LFT tests on site.

Any parent worried or concerned about carrying out the testing process at home should contact PLC asap. We will then be able to discuss the process with you and look at what we can do to support you.

Home Tuition students

For students who are supported at home through Home Tuition, the tutor will deliver a home testing kit to you. However, they will not be able to carry out the test on your child, you will need to support your child with this yourself. Please use the links above to help you through the process. We do not need you to complete the online consent if you are completing the tests at home. If you choose to do the test with your child, this is considered as assumed consent.

Other questions you may have...

What if my child or someone in my household has Covid symptoms?

This asymptomatic testing programme does not replace current guidance for anyone with Covid symptoms or those identified as a close contact of a positive case. Anyone with symptoms, whether they are involved in the asymptomatic (LFT) programme or not, should book a free NHS test and follow government self-isolation guidance until the results of their test are known.

Does my child have to test?

Testing is voluntary but students are still expected to attend school even if they decide not to take part in testing. However, we would like to encourage everyone to join in the asymptomatic testing programme to help break transmission links by identifying those that may be carrying the virus unknowingly.

Please also remember that testing does not replace basic preventative measures such as regular handwashing, wearing face coverings and social distancing.


What if a student can't tolerate a swab at all?

Any individual unable to tolerate a swab should not be tested. Testing technology is developing all the time and the Government are continuing to work proactively on other approaches to testing for children and young people who are unable to tolerate a throat or nasal swab.

Where possible a combined nose and throat swab should be taken. However, a student-centred approach can be used to assess which sample to take from each child or young person. In such cases, where a combined nose and throat swab is not possible, a nose swab from both nostrils can be taken. Similarly, if for some reason a nasal swab is not feasible, a throat swab alone will suffice.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter. PLC staff will be able to answer any questions you have, or will pass on your questions to members of the team who know your child best. We will then be able to discuss a way forward together, to meet the individual needs of your child.

Yours sincerely



Louise Leader

Headteacher
Pathways Learning Centre