



19th March 2021

Dear Parents/Carers

There is a real sense of optimism in the country now as our vaccine programme is rolled out rapidly as we see the Prime Minister's roadmap for a return to normal. We were all delighted when schools were allowed to reopen properly on 8th March, and it has been wonderful seeing our young people returning to work with their teachers.

All the schools in the Trust have made every effort to make the school environment as safe as possible and updated risk assessments have been put in place and checked by our Trust central team. All schools are following the Government's guidance in all aspects of their operations and in doing so are keeping children and staff as safe as possible.

However, the virus has not gone away. Schools across the country are still experiencing disruption caused by positive cases being identified within the school community or school pupils and staff having been in contact with others with the virus outside of school. As you know staff are now testing themselves at home and upon their return, secondary aged children, who consented, were tested three times in school, before being issued with tests to do at home. The testing, however, does not act like a vaccine and stop COVID. It simply tells us where it is present. As we do more testing, we are likely to discover more cases as we are picking up people who are "a-symptomatic".

It is still the case that when an individual is testing positive they and those who they have had close contact with have had to self-isolate. Although the Government did consider bringing in "close contact" testing, this was paused by the Government and there are no plans to reinstate it.

Despite all our best intentions there will be times, when children's education will be disrupted because of the virus. We all know how disappointing this is and what an impact it has on working families. We are still in a global pandemic and we will have to be patient over the next few months as we hopefully start to come to the end of this dreadful period. In the meantime, I would ask that you continue to observe the COVID regulations at home and do all you can to support our schools safe. This does mean, of course, keeping your child off school if they have any symptoms that could relate to COVID. I would urge parents to be cautious if they are in doubt.

It also means that children need to continue to follow the rules in school regarding handwashing, wearing of face coverings, respiratory hygiene, using asymptomatic testing kits at home if you have signed up for testing and social distancing.

This has been an incredibly difficult and long 12 months for everyone, and our Headteachers and school staff have endured a lot to try and keep the education system for our young people working as best they can. I would ask for your patience and appreciation of the difficult choices and decisions our school leaders sometimes have to make, which I can assure you will always be in the best interests of children and families.

Yours sincerely

Richard Sheriff
CEO – Red Kite learning Trust

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