

Wednesday 31st March, 2021.



# Penketh High School

Dear parents and carers,

As we bring this term to a close I want to take some time to reflect on what has been an extremely long and difficult term for a number of reasons. It goes without saying that we've all found the period of lockdown difficult, but our young people have no doubt found this especially difficult having not only missed school but also interactions with friends during what is a crucial time in their development. We are also aware that some of our families have had to support friends and loved ones enduring illness and, in some cases, have tragically lost family members.

Year 11 too have also had to deal with a period of uncertainty as the exams that they've worked so hard to undertake have been cancelled and they've faced a period of uncertainty as to how their grades will be awarded in the summer.

So, for many reasons, this has been an extremely difficult time; but I'm so proud to say that during this period our magnificent pupils have provided plenty of reasons to be positive as we look towards a brighter future. I'm so proud of how the staff and pupils came together to engage in online learning, with a clear sense of purpose as they refused to let the circumstances prevent progress being made. The volume and quality of the examples of work that staff were keen to share was incredible and this, coupled with the fact that over 1300 Going for Gold postcards were issued during the 8 weeks of remote learning, really serves to demonstrate the commitment of our wonderful young people.

It's been fantastic to see pupils back in school, we've been thrilled to have them back in the classroom. Their learning scores have been superb and there's a real sense that they're pleased to be back in school, to be seeing their friends and to be working closely with staff to make progress.

We've wanted to give pupils this period up to Easter to transition back to the classroom and refamiliarise themselves with the structure and routines of school. Pupils have reintegrated well and have embraced the high expectations and standards that we set each day. We know that there have been some uniform issues as a result of retail being closed during this period, but staff have worked closely with families where we've identified issues so that these can be resolved ahead of the Summer Term commencing on Monday 19<sup>th</sup> of April, 2021.

### **COVID cases during the holiday**

Given that community transmission of COVID-19 has plateaued there is a chance that some pupils may contract coronavirus over the next few weeks. Where pupils become symptomatic on either Friday the 2<sup>nd</sup> of April or Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> of April and go on to test positive, we have some clear processes in place so that we can engage in contact tracing those in school who would be classed as close contacts of the individual who tests positive. I must stress that if a pupil becomes symptomatic on Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> of April or beyond, you do not need to contact the school as pupils will not have been in school during the 48 hours where they are infectious prior to developing symptoms. Where this is the case you will need to notify us of your child's positive test upon our return after the Easter break and you should engage in with NHS track and trace programme.



**PART OF THE CHALLENGE ACADEMY TRUST | NURTURE | CHALLENGE | ACHIEVE**

THE CHALLENGE ACADEMY TRUST C/O PRIESTLEY COLLEGE, LOUSHERS LN, WARRINGTON WA4 6RD. COMPANY NUMBER 10689247

Penketh High School, Heath Road, Penketh, Warrington, WA5 2BY

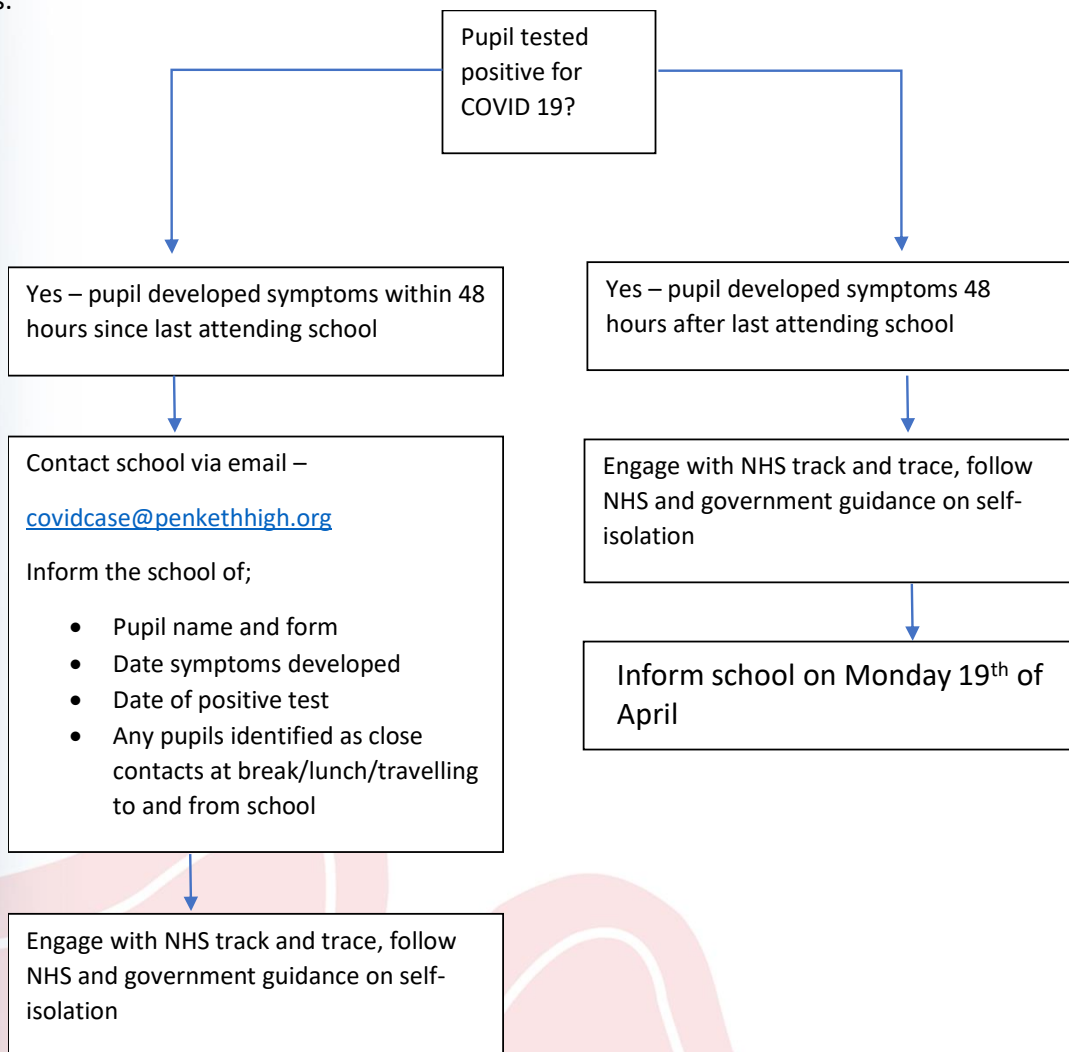
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The diagram below outlines the steps parents should take where pupils test positive for COVID-19 during the holidays.



For any cases that arise where symptoms have developed within 48 hours since the pupil was last in school, we will complete contact tracing identifying pupils who have been in close contact with the individual who has tested positive. We will contact the parents of those pupils who are close contacts indicating that they will need to self-isolate for 10 days as indicated in the current government guidance.

Our senior team will be taking responsibility for undertaking this contact tracing process over the first week of the Easter holidays where necessary. We will be allocating a time period each day where this will be picked up as suggested in the guidance issued to schools by the Department for Education. You will receive a response within 24 hours should you need to contact the school because your child has developed symptoms within the first 48 hours of school closure and has tested positive for COVID 19.

I know for those identified as close contacts and asked to self-isolate this might be frustrating and may impact on your plans for Easter break as restrictions ease, but I'd like to remind parents that we have to deliver this information and instruction as we have been mandated to do so by the government.

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## Home Testing

We have now issued additional home testing kits to all pupils who signed up to the rapid testing scheme. This provides pupils with an additional 6 home testing kits which would mean they can undertake a test twice per week across the Easter break and before they return to school. These should be done 3 – 5 days apart and results should be recorded with the NHS as identified within the guidance included in the testing packs. You also need to notify the school of test results and we have created a simple form you can complete online to make this process easier, this can be found here;

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=HWYZ4yvdf0SAwN0X3rJGsQT6w7wKqFRMIsLC9K624ktUREM1MTVGTVDVDSFpWVTkwUIZZNkNFOVITMy4u>

There was a change to guidance last night that stipulates that anyone who receives a positive test from their LTF test at home should seek a confirmatory PCR test through the NHS. The guidance states;

***“This means that all staff, pupils and students who get a positive LFD test, whether at home or supervised at their school or college, should get a confirmatory PCR. The PCR test should be booked immediately either online or by calling 119 and should be undertaken within 2 days.”***

Staff, students and pupils who had a positive LFD test result, and their close contacts and other members of their household, should self-isolate immediately in line with NHS Test and Trace guidance and while awaiting the PCR result.

## Pupil wellbeing

Of course, whilst we're absolutely focused on ensuring that our young people get back to making progress so that they are well prepared to be successful in life, we also know how difficult the last year has been. So we need to ensure that we're doing all that we can to support them. We're mindful that time away from school might mean that pupils who need support might not have access to the information we can provide them with to direct them to relevant support services. We've added a resource information pack to the school website. This provides information, advice and guidance on how to support pupils during the holidays but also beyond. The pack includes details of organisations who can support young people during the break from school and links to useful online information and services who can also offer support. This can be found via the link below;

<https://www.penkethhigh.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Parent-wellbeing-pack-PHS-Easter-break-2021.pdf>

## Enrichment

Parents will know that our enrichment programme has been a huge part of school life in the last few years and not being able to offer over 50 enrichment sessions for pupils has been a frustrating aspect of needing to operate under restrictions this year. We know how important wider opportunities are for the holistic development of our young people. Indeed we're extremely excited about the developments we have planned for this area of school life next year. We are mindful, however, that we'd like to be able to offer our young people opportunities to engage in enrichment this year.

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



International School Award



Healthy School



INVESTOR IN CAREERS



SCHOOL AMBASSADOR



I'm pleased to say that on our return to school after the holidays, we'll be offering pupils a streamlined enrichment programme. This will be a programme of year group specific opportunities so that we aren't crossing year group bubbles and they will operate after school. We will release more information to pupils on our return and they will have an opportunity to sign up for those sessions they are interested in.

Despite the challenges that we face we remain focused on doing whatever we can to drive improvement at the school. We're excited about our plans for next year, more details of which we'll be forwarding to parents in the coming weeks. We want to ensure that our pupils get the best possible experiences that serve them well during their time at school and beyond.

Parents will be aware that traditionally schools have a slightly earlier finish than normal on the last day of each full term. We won't be doing so on Thursday and school will finish at the normal time on Thursday afternoon.

Thank you to all of our families for your incredible support. It's fair to say that this year has presented a number challenges and your kind words and words of encouragement across this period have meant a great deal to us all. We value the relationships we have with our families and look forward to continuing to work closely with you to best support our young people.

I'd like to wish you and your family all the very best at this time.

Yours sincerely,

Mr J Carlin.

Principal.



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