

1st September 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

RE: New Academic Year – Updated Government Guidance

Following our letter on Friday afternoon, which detailed the arrangements for returning to the Academy this week, the Department for Education (DfE) has released another updated guidance on the full reopening of schools. This guidance was released late on Friday evening and we have taken time over the weekend to review our risk assessments and day-to-day arrangements to ensure they reflect the expected best practice.

However, as we outlined in our previous letter, a comprehensive risk assessment was completed that allowed a COVID safe opening this week. This still remains the case and the Academy will safely open exactly as planned. This update has given us some additional factors to consider and we are writing today to share some additional information regarding the operating procedures for this half term.

Use of Face Masks/Coverings

The WMG Academy protocols on face masks/coverings remain unchanged, and there is a reminder of these expectations below; however, we now want to share with you some general principles from the latest guidance for the safe use of face masks/coverings, which include:

- A face covering should:
 - cover your nose and mouth while allowing you to breathe comfortably;
 - fit comfortably but securely against the side of the face;
 - be secured to the head with ties or ear loops;
 - be made of a material that you find to be comfortable and breathable, such as cotton;
 - ideally include at least two layers of fabric (the World Health Organisation recommends three depending on the fabric used);
 - unless disposable, it should be able to be washed with other items of laundry according to fabric washing instructions and dried without causing the face covering to be damaged;
- When wearing a face covering you should:
 - wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser before putting a face covering on;
 - avoid wearing on your neck or forehead;
 - avoid touching the part of the face covering in contact with your mouth and nose, as it could be contaminated with the virus;
 - change the face covering if it becomes damp or if you've touched it;
 - avoid taking it off and putting it back on a lot in quick succession;
- When removing a face covering you should:
 - wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser before removing;
 - only handle the straps, ties or clips;
 - do not give it to someone else to use;
 - if single-use, dispose of it carefully in a residual waste bin and do not recycle;

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- if reusable, wash it in line with manufacturer's instructions at the highest temperature appropriate for the fabric;
- wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser once removed.

The WMG Academy protocols on face masks/coverings are as follows:

- **Students must wear a face mask/covering** at all times when inside the building, other than when in learning bases for lessons or when they need to remove it for eating and drinking. Students can continue to wear their face mask/covering in lessons if they wish to do so, but it is not compulsory.
- Disposable face masks/coverings should be replaced regularly and should be disposed of properly using bins that are provided.
- Face masks/coverings **must be plain and not patterned**, and can only cover the nose and mouth.
- We will continue to review our protocols on face masks/coverings and will respond accordingly in the event of any local or regional tightening or easing of lockdown protocols and procedures.
- Parents of students who are exempt from wearing a face mask/covering due to medical reasons should make us aware by email to info@wmgacademy.org.uk.

Self-Isolation and Quarantine Periods

There have been some changes to the procedures for self-isolating announced in the Government's latest advice which we have clarified below:

- When should I self-isolate?
 - If you have symptoms of coronavirus;
 - If you have tested positive for coronavirus;
 - If you live with someone who has symptoms or has tested positive;
 - If someone in your support bubble has symptoms or has tested positive;
 - If you have been told to do so by NHS Track and Trace;
 - If you have returned to the UK from a country which is not listed on the UK Government's Travel Corridor list.
- How long should I self-isolate for?
 - 10 days if you develop symptoms. You should arrange a test within the first 5 days and can return to work or school if you receive a negative result. If you test positive, you must self-isolate for the full 10 days.
 - 14 days if someone you live with or someone within your support bubble displays symptoms. If the symptomatic person tests positive, you can stop self-isolating. If they test positive, you must self-isolate for the full 14 days.
 - 14 days if you have been told to self-isolate by NHS Track and Trace or if you have returned to the UK from a country which is not listed on the UK Government's Travel Corridor list. If you develop symptoms in this period, you should then start a new 10-day period of self-isolation and arrange a test.
- WMG Academy reserves the right to refuse entry to any student, parent, visitor or member of staff who is displaying symptoms of COVID-19.

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Contingency Planning

The DfE have asked all schools and other education settings to produce contingency plans so that students will continue to receive a high-quality education in the event of further school closure. We are in the process of further refining our contingency plans which we will share with parents in due course. In the meantime, we have included an overview of the Government's tiered approach to easing and tightening restrictions nationally or locally, which includes when and how it would be deemed necessary for schools to close.

- Tier 1 – schools will remain open and staff and students over the age of 11 will be required to wear a face mask/covering when moving around communal areas. Please note that WMG Academy have already adopted this approach.
- Tier 2 – schools will remain open, with other restrictions being reintroduced, including the closure of pubs, restaurants and some shops. If further restrictions are needed, schools may be asked to introduce a rota system where each student 'bubble' will be given specific times to attend school and asked to learn remotely at other times.
- Tier 3 – all secondary schools would be asked to close and education would be continued remotely. Onsite provision for vulnerable students and the children of key workers would be available.
- Tier 4 – all schools and other education settings would be asked to close and education would be continued remotely. Onsite provision for vulnerable students and the children of key workers would be available.

To aid us in our planning, we need to ensure that we have a good understanding of the technology students have access to at home. If you are concerned that your child would be disadvantaged during any further school closures because they do not have access to a computer and/or the internet at home, please let us know by emailing info@wmgacademy.org.uk.

Next Steps

The staff at WMG Academy are working tirelessly to ensure the Academy will reopen safely this week, and the complex situations and rapidly changing guidance we are facing make this even more challenging. As always, our WMG Academy community have been nothing but supportive and we would like to thank both students and parents for their ongoing patience and understanding.

We apologise for sending yet another letter in such quick succession to our previous correspondence but we always aim to update parents/carers the moment guidance changes or is updated.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Academy by calling 02476 464 661 or emailing info@wmgacademy.org.uk.

Yours faithfully,



Mrs K Tague
Executive Principal



Mr M Brady
Associate Principal

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