



MacIntyre Academies Discovery Academy

Vernons Lane, Nuneaton, CV11 5SS
024 7710 3370
discovery.office@macintyreacademies.org
www.thediscoveryacademy.org

20th May 2020

Dear parents and carers,

Firstly, on national Thank a Teacher Day, I am sure you will join me in thanking all Discovery staff for their tireless, dedicated and highly skilled work. This has taken place throughout the year, not just in the recent Covid Era. They are a great team and I know you appreciate the differences they are making to your children's lives.

Secondly, because you should never start with one, an apology. This letter will be long but please bear with me. I have used sections and bullet points to try and make it easier for you to find specific sections or answer questions you may have. I want to set out the why, how and what we will be doing in the near future.

Four Top Priorities

Everyone remains safe and healthy;
we remain a united and cohesive school family;
anxieties for staff and students do not increase;
children and young people's needs continue to be met – both emotional and academic.

Our belief

As a group of school leaders the Senior Leadership Team and Local Advisory Board met last night and are agreed that we need to maintain a safe environment where we can meet emotional and educational needs for all in the Discovery family. We have drawn up some guidelines and principles to enable this to happen, within the national context and (ever changing) government advice. The next big release of information is Thursday 28th May (half term) and as a result provision for the week beginning 1st June will be very similar to this week.

As a group of leaders we do not want anyone (staff or student) to be anxious about attending school; will not "punish" anyone, or their family, for not attending and understand that many adults and children are safer at home at this time.

Moving Forward

We have clear plans for keeping everyone on site safe and for the transition back to more people in school as and when that develops. **We will be using an emotion led approach** and have clear strategies for catching up missed work; however that is secondary for many students. For those expecting exams in 2021 there are already discussions at a national level about assessment for GCSE and level 2 courses and we will provide further direct information to Year 10 and 12 families in the first week of June. We will not prioritise any particular age group for a return.

Site safety

At present 21 children and young people are attending Discovery; generally for two sessions a week of 2 hours each. There are no more than 12 in school on any day, no more than 9 at any one time. School looks and feels very different with such low numbers and we reassure everyone you are not missing out on group activities or friend interactions. They are happening on Microsoft Teams to great effect. About 20 staff (maximum) are on site on any given day.



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We have set a limit of **30 learners** and **40 staff** to be on site whilst physical distancing is required. This includes a full time cleaner who will continually maintain high standards of hygiene. PPE is available for those who request it. There will be no more than 3 children / young people in any room with 2 adults.

Who can attend?

As a child or young person with an EHCP, provision is available. We risk assess each learner for their current anxieties and needs before finalising their on site support.

Our current demand for places is well below the maximum we have set. We have been able to meet all requests for in school support, as well as off site learning. We are able to lend netbooks if you need more online connectivity for the Teams meetings, online learning and website usage. Classes are also sending resources home in the post.

If demand exceeds the safe maximum for site attendance we will prioritise as follows:

- Children at immediate risk of harm receiving all that is requested;
- Current Learners in Yrs 5 – 10 receiving a quota of what they request;
- Children and Young People joining the academy in September having induction events and transition support;
- Young People in years 11, 12 and 13 having some support – possibly off site if needed / allowed.

Feedback is that 2 or 3 sessions of two hours (10 to 12) or 12 to 2 is sufficient to reduce anxieties, create routine and maintain a sense of belonging to school. Learners continue to use outside spaces, go off site and cook, soft play is not in use.

What about a visit?

If you would like to come and visit school, just to reconnect, then please call your class team on their phone or me on 07494 457314. We can have a physically distanced chat, a walk around and reassure you and your son / daughter that they are part of the Discovery family.

Who will work with my son / daughter?

At present we have generally used familiar staff for all learners on site. However staff are parents and carers too and have their own families to consider. They are entitled to school places for their children as essential workers but that is not always the best option; some need to shield. We need to warn you that whilst our aim will always be for them to be in a familiar room with well known staff, this cannot be guaranteed.

What if I feel ill?

No one should attend school if they have any symptoms of any illness. We will not be undertaking temperature checks as baseline temperatures vary so much between people. Please always err on the side of caution. Covid 19 tests are now available for anyone displaying symptoms; please inform us if anyone in your household has a positive diagnosis or advice to shield / isolate.

Who do I contact?

The SLT link with your son / daughter's class will continue to call you about provision. The expectation is that the week beginning 1st June is the same as this week For 2 weeks beginning 8th June calls will be made on 3rd June and decisions (in line with



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criteria above) made by the 5th

For 2 weeks beginning 22nd June, calls 17th, decision on 19th

For the last 2 weeks of terms calls on 1st July and decisions on 3rd.

Matthew Pike	07494 457314	Emily Bott	07852 436758
Chris Harlan-Marks	07415 467774	Anna Mullis	07508 674854
Lorraine Nicholls	07377 863354		

Transport

Most of those attending site at the moment are using parent power to get here. However Warwickshire County Council are able to put on taxis and have been very reliable so far. The majority of taxi drivers and escorts are using face covering and we continue to liaise with Warwickshire County Council when a child or young person requesting on site provision needs transport. This is all co-ordinated by Lorraine Nicholls (07377 863354). We know transport sharing and cleanliness is a top priority for you and are doing all we can to ensure it is a not place where infection could be caught.

Free School Meals

We continue to provide free school meal vouchers. No hot food is being provided by the school although some students are cooking as part of their on site activities. We do have some snacks available, if you need help regarding school meal vouchers please contact Jo Robinson on 07494 715225.

Half Term

School is closed next week, however if you have a safeguarding concern, or need emergency family support please e-mail Matthew on matthew.pike@macintyreademies.org and he will respond. School is open for contractors and so you can call the main number as well. Lorraine will also be available on 07377 863354 if you are used to talking to her.

What happens when it is safe for all to return?

When that times comes we will be delighted to have everyone here. We will close to children for a period of time in order to ensure that the staff team is fully prepared for a full school. New joiners will be fully integrated, those leaving this year will have a leavers' event to "close" their time at Discovery and celebrate their achievements.

I hope this answers your questions and explains why we are doing what we are doing. As numbers increase in school we will continue to risk assess, build on current new procedures and may instigate further measures to reduce the spread of infection e.g. use outside doors only. Safety and maintaining health are a top priority for us all.

I will continue to write to you as I know more

Stay safe

Matthew