



## MacIntyre Academies Discovery Academy

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

3<sup>rd</sup> January 2021

Dear all

Unusual times call for unusual approaches, hence this single letter for all carers, consultants, LAB members, parents, staff and students linked to Discovery.

### **Happy New Year**

I hope that the two weeks over Christmas brought you what you needed, be that a book, company, piece of tech, rest, peace ... and I wish you all a safe and healthy 2021. It is clear that we will need to continue to work closely together for the benefit of us all. Thank you for your continued support and patience and I urge you all to continue to follow all guidelines for tier 4.

### **Return to School for Staff**

The expectation is that all Discovery staff will be working tomorrow and Tuesday; to receive remote training in their class / team bubbles. Staff who are CEV or shielding will be able to access this at home using the same links as those in school.

### **Return to School for Students**

At present we expect to be open to all children and young people at 8.40 on Weds 6<sup>th</sup> January. We have training days on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> which have been in the diary for well over 18 months and in one case postponed twice already due to the pandemic. 3 of the 4 sessions are being led by external consultants and we must give them our full attention. Therefore, please do not expect replies to phone calls or texts until 3.45 on Tuesday. The majority of staff will be working to 4.30 all being well.

### **Staying Safe**

The safest place for avoiding Covid is clearly isolation within the family home. However that may not be the best place for the overall wellbeing and development of students or adults. We hope that all our children, young people and staff feel that Discovery is a safe setting for them to attend but understand if parents / carers would like us to provide remote learning; this would be a mixture of written materials and online sessions. Leaders also hope that all staff feel able to attend but understand that some Unions are seeking legal advice as to whether staff are within their rights to state they will work from home.

### **One day at a time!**

This has to be our approach at present and we should be able to stay open providing that we remain Covid secure and that our staff's dependents are able to be educated in their own settings as children of key workers. I know you will all understand we may need to increase remote learning if safe staffing ratios cannot be maintained in a particular bubble.



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### **Covid Testing**

Anytime after 8.00 am tomorrow we are expecting a delivery of tests and PPE; however there will be much to do to ensure we are trained and able to provide these as expected. It now seems that providing tests in school is mandatory but the take up by staff and students is optional, and requires full written consent from individuals and parents / carers when aged 16 or under. Separate information, including consent forms, will be distributed asap. I think it is fair to say that the week beginning 11<sup>th</sup> Jan is the earliest we will be testing. We plan to test about 20% of the school each day; testing each bubble as a group. If anyone feels confident in medical procedures and would like to help our team of testers please do contact me by text 07494 457314 or e-mail [matthew.pike@macintyreacademies.org](mailto:matthew.pike@macintyreacademies.org)

### **National Advice**

This is regularly updated and available to all. To save you time these links may help:

General information: <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus/education-and-childcare>

The Contingency Framework: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-contingency-framework-for-education-and-childcare-settings/contingency-framework-education-and-childcare-settings-excluding-universities>

Specialist Setting Expectations: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-full-opening-special-schools-and-other-specialist-settings>

Testing in Specialist Schools: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-full-opening-special-schools-and-other-specialist-settings/mass-asymptomatic-testing-in-specialist-settings>

### **School Transport**

This remains the biggest worry of many, including other Heads across Warwickshire. We encourage all children and young people to be in school and to follow the advice of hands, face, space at all times. School Transport is a complex and expensive department run by WCC; we have little influence. Taxis remain booked for all learners; LCC have confirmed this over the last 48 hours. If you are going to use alternative methods of transport to reduce risk of infection / transmission please inform both Lorraine (07377 863354) and your driver / escort.

### **Remote Learning at Discovery**

We hope that all our children and young people feel that Discovery is a safe setting for them to attend but understand if parents / carers would like us to provide remote learning; this would be a mixture of written materials and online sessions. We are very pleased with the remote learning that has taken place since April 2020; the mixture of taught sessions, independent study, group work and social interactions. These can, of course, continue for those who either choose to be learning remotely or need to be isolating for medical reasons. This should all be up and running smoothly from Thursday this week.

### **Bubbles**

We will reduce the number of bubbles from 8 to 5 in order to test a whole bubble each day, and each bubble each week. This will give us greater flexibility of re-allocating staff in the event of any illness and allow some mixing of children indoors over the coldest months of the year. Class D will



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continue to be the only users of soft play. Our bubbles and sizes are below – far more manageable than in any mainstream setting.

Class(es)	Number of CYP	Number of class staff	Number of associated staff	Total	Proposed testing day (TBC)
D	9	6	11	26	Thursday
I S C	26	16	1	43	Friday
E R	12	10	8	30	Monday
X Y	17	12	2	31	Wednesday
O V P16	19	15	0	34	Tuesday

I am sorry this letter is so long and so close to the start of term; other versions have been rendered out of date quickly by fresh information and approaches.

If you have further questions please do e-mail me directly – this will be the best way for me to respond quickly, personally and not lose a thread of correspondence. [Matthew.pike@macintyreacademies.org](mailto:Matthew.pike@macintyreacademies.org)

I finish, where I started, by wishing you and those close to you, all the very best for 2021.

Yours sincerely

Matthew Pike  
Principal