

23rd February 2021

To: All employees of Reach South Academy Trust

Dear Colleagues,

On the 22nd February, the Prime Minister announced the Government's plan for easing the social restrictions that have been necessary to reduce the levels of infection of Covid-19. With increasing levels of immunisation every day, we have good reasons to be optimistic about a gradual return to normal life and to begin the process of healing for our communities. The Government's plan includes the re-opening of schools for all pupils from 8th March. Those staff who are classed as Clinically Extremely Vulnerable and have received a letter to this effect will continue to work from home or stay at home until 31 March 2021, in line with Government advice to shield.

Although the situation is now improving every day, we are not there yet. The first dose of immunisation of every adult in the UK will not be completed until the end of July. Primary and secondary aged children catch and pass on the virus, despite the myths saying that they don't, but we are so grateful that they rarely get seriously ill when they do catch it. It is not yet completely clear whether there are different levels of protection offered by the current vaccines for new variants of Covid-19 though there is some evidence that the vaccines do reduce the risk of very serious illness and death from the known new variants. For all of these reasons, it is essential that we continue to observe the highest levels of hygiene and infection controls within our academies and within our classrooms. We must continue to take all of the necessary precautions to protect our pupils from the virus, while they are in school. We must also continue to take all of the necessary precautions to protect ourselves and our own families from the virus. We should be optimistic but we must also remain vigilant.

This pandemic has caused real trauma for many of the families of our pupils and the communities we serve. That trauma will have significant impact on some of our pupils. The loss of beloved relatives; families facing financial insecurity and loss of employment; a consistent message of fear of infection. We must be acutely sensitive to these impacts that will be on-going for many of our pupils' families long after the pandemic comes to an end. The only reason that this trauma is now slowly coming to an end, is the successful programme of vaccination in the United Kingdom. It is vaccination that will bring the dreadful rate of serious illness and untimely death of so many of our fellow citizens to an end. It is vaccination that will allow society to open up again so that incomes and employment can again be secured for all. It is vaccination that will bring to an end the constant messages about fear of infection. Every member of staff in Reach South has a civic and moral duty to be vaccinated against Covid-19 as soon as we are offered the injection. A civic duty to protect ourselves and a moral duty to protect those around us. I was delighted to receive my first vaccination dose during February half-term.

With very best wishes,



Dean Ashton
Chief Executive Officer