

15<sup>th</sup> December 2021

To: All employees of Reach South Academy Trust

Dear Colleagues,

The nation will celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee this year. As part of the celebrations, the Government has announced an additional bank holiday. The additional bank holiday, however, falls in the Summer half term. To compensate for that, the Trust has decided to shorten the Summer term for all of our academies by one-day. **The originally planned last day of the Summer term will now be a holiday for pupils and staff.** The last day of term will now be the day before the one originally planned.

We are approaching the end of the 2021 Autumn term and looking forward to the Christmas celebrations. We began this new academic year hoping for a return to normality after the COVID-19 lockdown disruptions during the previous two academic years. We hoped for the best but prepared for the worst. As it turned out, our schools have stayed open, but against a backdrop of high rates of COVID-19 infections, along with other infections, which have meant high levels of staff and pupil absence at times. That puts a huge pressure on all of you in doing your best to keep our classrooms open and safe for as many of our pupils as possible. Despite all of these pressures, our frontline staff have kept our schools open and have maintained learning progression for our pupils. I cannot thank you enough for your professionalism and commitment, under sustained pressure, in delivering for our pupils and their families.

The national vaccination programme has hugely reduced the impact of COVID-19 on our health and our ability to keep our schools open this term. The Omicron variant is now spreading quickly. The mutations in this variant mean that the existing vaccinations, while still offering protection against serious illness, provide significantly reduced protection against infection. Having a booster vaccination helps reinforce that protection. That protection is not just about protecting ourselves so that we can continue to support our pupils and colleagues; it is also about protecting those that we meet in our professional and personal lives.

The DfE has now changed the requirements for all of us in schools should we be identified as being in contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19. The requirements now differentiate between those that have been vaccinated (at least 2-doses) and those that have not. The differentiation reflects the different risks that we create in choosing whether to be vaccinated.

1. **If you are not vaccinated** and you are exposed to someone with COVID-19, self-isolate for 10-days and book a PCR test if you develop symptoms.
2. **If you are vaccinated** and you are exposed to someone with COVID-19, you do not need to self-isolate. Instead, take an LFD test each day for 7-days. If you test positive with an LFD, self-isolate and book a PCR test. If you test negative on the PCR test, stop self-isolating but continue the daily LFD tests for the 7-days.

Staff who are vaccinated and have to self-isolate will be supported by the Trust. Staff who are medically exempt from being vaccinated and have provided the necessary evidence to

HR, will be supported by the Trust if they have to self-isolate. Staff who choose not to be vaccinated and have to self-isolate, will not be supported by the Trust.

Christmas approaches and I sincerely hope that you all have a much-needed rest and a safe Christmas.

Thank you again for all that you do for all of our pupils and their families. Thank you for your positivity and continued willingness to do whatever it takes to keep our schools safe and happy places of learning, despite the challenges.

Have a happy Christmas and I look forward to seeing you all in the new year.

With Season's Greetings,

Dean

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Ashton'.

Dean Ashton  
Chief Executive Officer