

5 January 2020

Dear parents and carers,

I am writing to confirm the arrangements regarding the opening of Northern House Academy.

As you are aware the Prime Minister has announced a new national lockdown in England from 6 January 2021 as a response to the increasing rates of Covid-19 infections. During the period of national lockdown, schools, alternative provision, special schools, and colleges will remain open to vulnerable children and young people and to the children of critical workers. All other students will learn remotely. All decisions regarding opening will be based on full and detailed Health and Safety risk assessments. Limiting attendance at school is intended to reduce Covid-19 transmission rates through the reduction of contacts we have with people outside of our own households.

You may also be aware that the education unions are in communication with the Government, and some unions are advising their members to refuse to attend their workplaces due to their views on the Health and Safety risks caused by current rates of Covid-19. You will appreciate that staff attendance is additionally affected by the requirement to self-isolate, and by illness. An important factor in risk assessing school provision is consideration of staffing levels, to ensure that the school remains open while focussing on the safety and wellbeing of pupils and staff. Other factors to consider include the availability of core services and access to vital infrastructure and resources, such as catering and cleaning. We also need to consider the needs of individual pupils, and our ability to meet these needs. All staff and pupils in school will be required to socially distance from one another to reduce the spread of coronavirus.

I have carefully assessed the situation at Northern House Academy, in line with the Government's national lockdown and the academy's Emergency School Closure Policy, and confirm that the school will be **partially open from Wednesday 6 January 2021 until Friday 15 January 2021**. The school will make provision for vulnerable children and children of critical workers.

In order to make plans for the coming days, school staff will be making contact with you to discuss the provision that can be made for your child. Each pupil will be assessed on a case by case basis.

Remote learning will be provided for all children who are not attending school. Class teachers will be making contact with you later this week to discuss arrangements for this. All students will receive at least 3 hours of remote learning daily.

The government has also confirmed that families of children who are entitled to free school meals but not attending school will receive support in the form of supermarket vouchers. Again, we will be in touch regarding how to access these vouchers.

I thought it would also be useful to you to update you on the Government's programme to introduce a mass Covid-19 testing programme in schools. The Gallery Trust supports the principle of testing of pupils and staff. However, the government are only rolling this out in secondary schools and there are a number of steps which we will need to address before we can implement this programme, including making operational arrangements and undertaking training to ensure that the testing is safe and effective. I will keep in touch with you regarding this initiative.

I want to assure you that The Gallery Trust is committed to delivering education to children and young people in accordance with Government guidance, and we will continue to act in the best interests of our communities in the face of complex challenges.

Thank you for your support at this time. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any queries.

Mrs B Holmes
Head of School