

Friday 12<sup>th</sup> February 2021

Dear Families,

I'm writing with an update as we go into our February half-term break. I have done a video update with the same information

here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=523czBv5dsE&feature=youtu.be>

### **Spring 1: January 11<sup>th</sup> – February 12<sup>th</sup>**

After lockdown was announced on the 4<sup>th</sup> of January, our goal was to implement an educational approach that would provide certainty and predictability in a very volatile time. With your support, this goal has been achieved – thank you.

Over this half-term, we have been providing learning from school for about 30 pupils every week at The Rise. This has allowed us to reduce footfall, increase social distancing, keeping the community as safe as possible with just one positive case. Given the external climate, this feels like a success. It could not have been achieved without the support of the majority of families making learning from home work; we are so grateful for your partnership.

There have been many highlights: our IGCSE English results, vibrant assemblies produced by classes, incredible culinary creations by Year 10 and Year 11 for Food Tech, the incredible resilience and adaptability by the whole community to learn in an entirely different way.

### **Half-term: Monday 15<sup>th</sup> – Sunday 21<sup>st</sup>**

#### Reporting covid symptoms:

Please continue to be in touch over half-term with any important covid information:

- Has your child now got symptoms? If they were learning from school we might need to do track and trace to alert other families and staff. Please provide this information:
  - Last day at school:
  - Date of symptoms:
  - Date of test:
  - Date result received:
- Has anyone in your household got symptoms which means your child can't return to school on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup>?

As at Christmas, please email this to [covid.comms@theriseschool.com](mailto:covid.comms@theriseschool.com)

#### **Free School Meals:**

In an update from one of my video messages, although the government has said that it is not centrally funding FSM vouchers and families should access the Covid Winter Grant Scheme, we at Ambitious about Autism have decided to continue to provide vouchers to our families. Times are hard enough as it is! Diana White has been organising this so if you're eligible and you've got any questions please contact her on [diana.white@theriseschool.com](mailto:diana.white@theriseschool.com).



### **Spring 2a: February 22<sup>nd</sup> – March 8<sup>th</sup>**

The government has said they are going to review lockdown on the 15<sup>th</sup> February. Another date that is being mentioned in the press is March 8<sup>th</sup>. At this time there is no clearer steer so we have put in place an approach for the first two weeks of the Spring 2 term. You can read the formal position statement here: <https://www.theriseschool.com/sites/default/files/policies/AaA-Position-Statement-on-national-lockdown-12-Feb-2021.pdf>

### **Educational Approach**

Having spoken to each family and understood their preference, we are now expanding our learning from school cohort to about 45 pupils.

We will continue to offer our complete Monday-Friday curriculum via the VLE for pupils regardless of whether they are learning from school or home.

### **Staff Testing**

The government directed us to increase our lateral flow testing of staff from once to twice a week. Now that we've got more staff scheduled to work from school in line with increased pupil numbers, we have had to take the decision to **finish the school day at 2pm on both Mondays and Thursdays.**

### **Pupil Testing**

Those families who are learning from school in w.c 22<sup>nd</sup> February will have received separate communication from Leigh-Anne Sullivan regarding getting your consent for pupils to be tested in the first week back as a "return to school" measure.

As with everything, our approach to testing both staff and pupils is being continually reviewed.

As always, thank you so much for your continued support and kind words. They mean a great deal to us all.

I hope you have a fantastic half-term and can spend it in restful and rejuvenating ways.

Kind regards,

Helen Ralston  
Head of The Rise School