

CWA/LDA/GHA

29 October 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

**Re: Whole Academy Arrangements for the next Half Term**

I hope this correspondence finds you and your respective families well after what I also hope has been a good half term break thus far.

I am writing to you to confirm some important whole academy arrangements and related matters as we near the start of the second half of the Autumn term. Therefore, please do take the time to read through and note the following:

- **COVID-19 vaccinations for 12-15 year olds** - to our parents and carers with children at the academy aged between 12 and 15 and who have not had a COVID-19 vaccine as of yet but still wish their children to receive it, if you haven't read the information I sent out on Monday (25 October 2021) regarding this matter, please take the time to do so. This is because it provides a further opportunity and pathway to pursue should you still wish to get your child vaccinated.

In addition to this, please find an [open letter](#) from the new Secretary of State for Education, Mr Nadhim Zahawi, received yesterday afternoon also regarding the 12-15 age group vaccination programme.

- **Lateral Flow Device Testing Programme** – As per my numerous correspondences regarding this specific matter over the course of the past 19 months, please do continue to test twice weekly with one being taken on the day before your child starts the school week. With this in mind, please test your child on the afternoon of Monday 1 November 2021 and prior to our students starting back at 8:25am on Tuesday 2 November 2021.

As has been done very well to date, any positive LFD results will need to be shared with the academy and the NHS, and a PCR test booked without delay. The person who has produced the positive LFD will then need to self-isolate until their PCR result comes back. **No other household member needs to self-isolate, however, unless they produce a positive LFD, have any of the three main COVID-19 symptoms or are contacted and told to do so by the NHS Track and Tracing Team.**

- **COVID-19 protocols** – all of these remain in place and as they have been throughout the past 19 months. These are: the wearing of face coverings whilst moving between lessons, on the corridors and whilst queuing up to access our canteens at break and lunch, sanitising in and out of classrooms and teaching areas, following one way systems whilst moving between lessons and at the start of break and lunch, forward facing seating in virtually all classrooms, separate year group 'zones' at break and lunch, virtual assemblies and staff meetings, open doors and windows in all classroom and teaching areas as well as offices and staff team bases, plus the choice of wearing academy only PE kit on the days your child has PE or Dance.
- **Face coverings on transport to and from the academy** – this remains in place as does a campus separation on the double decker buses with Mill Road Campus students remaining down stairs and Fambridge Road Campus upstairs. This also includes face coverings continuing to be worn by students who travel to and from the academy in a taxi.
- **The wearing of coats and hoodies in classrooms and on the corridors** – as I allowed from this point last year, despite the heating being on, so as to ensure optimum ventilation in all of our indoor areas, doors and windows will need to remain open as often as possible during the working day. Therefore, until further notice, I will, once again, be allowing students to wear coats or hoodies inside the building including in classroom environments. Hoods should not be up though and there will be no need for hats and gloves. This worked very well last year and I have no doubt the same will occur this year.
- **The wearing of Plume Academy only PE kit on the days your child has PE or Dance** – again, this has been done very well, been adhered to by the vast majority of our students and as a direct result, we have kept large numbers of students from starting and ending their lessons in crowded changing rooms, therefore, only further mitigating the risk posed by the virus. However, as was the case last half term and

last year, any student who opts to come in fashion wear (other than the coats and hoodies they will be allowed to wear indoors) rather than Plume Academy PE kit will see a call go home and an immediate change be requested. Persistent non-adherence will result in a removal from lessons, however, let us look to concentrate on the fact that 95%+ of our students and families have only ever fully adhered to this specific, clear and somewhat fair request.

- **Punctuality** – please note the first bell for the morning goes at **8:25am** meaning our students should be sat in their form groups and be ready to access their Personal Development curriculum or assemblies **by 8:30am latest**. Therefore, as well as my Colleagues and I maintaining a strong push to ensure we achieve this for as many of our students as possible, your further support in ensuring this is the case would also be greatly appreciated.

I know that invariably, there will be the odd day when a student or family is running late, however, we are seeing an increasing number of parents and carers dropping their children off after 8:30am, especially at our Fambridge Road Campus. Therefore, and again, moving forward, your support in assisting us to reduce this would be very much appreciated.

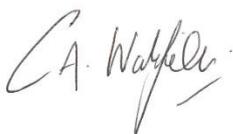
- **Communication with you regarding COVID-19 cases** – whilst there is now no longer a legal requirement for schools to do this, or indeed conduct any form of contact tracing, I can assure you that my Colleagues and I continue to manage, collate and carefully monitor COVID-19 matters on a daily basis, including the weekends and holiday periods. As you will have seen on two occasions over the past 19 months – one near the end of the last Autumn term and one near the end of the Summer term – I will contact you should any issues of concern arise in relation to COVID-19 cases at the academy. This is after activating our prepared Outbreak Management Plan and after seeking the input of the excellent Essex Contact Tracing Team. However, and in the spirit of open and honest communication, due to the combined efforts of the academy's staff, students and you, our families, cases have remained extremely low throughout the first half of the Autumn term. Direct evidence to support this was that by the close of the day on Thursday 21 October 2021, the day we broke up for half term, we had just three out of over 300 staff self-isolating (less than 1%) and 17 students out of 1727 self-isolating (which again, is less than 1%). These students were across all year groups so there was no identified cluster or outbreak as was the case throughout the half term, and the majority of cases were traced back to family/friendship contact with a confirmed case.

Furthermore, for the vast majority of the half term, the figures were actually much lower than this for both students and staff alike.

Nevertheless, and as I am sure you will agree, I believe these figures were as a direct result of our combined efforts in terms of adhering to our long-established and maintained COVID-19 protocols – protocols we simply must look to continue maintaining as we enter the more challenging Winter period.

Thank you for taking the time to read this pre-start of the new half term correspondence, as well as for your ongoing vitally important support which is only continuing to keep the academy's stakeholders as safe as possible as we carefully navigate our way through this ongoing challenging period of our lives.

Yours sincerely



**Mr C A Wakefield**  
**Executive Principal**

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*'Plume - Maldon's Community Academy' is the trading name of Plume School*

