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Our Ref: SYA/HWI

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Dear Parent/Carer

If you have been following the situation nationally you will have seen that rates of COVID infection both nationally and in our community have risen significantly since the half term break. This is having an impact on all sectors, including an estimated rate of absence for teachers across the country of 1 in 10.

The academy has deliberately overstaffed to try to avoid any disruption, but we are not able to totally insulate from this problem as we strive to maintain face to face provision. We hope that the perception of parents and carers has been one of as consistent a service as possible, but the days of being able to contact a supply agency and source additional staff to cover for absence seem, at least for now, to be over, and despite being in touch with all agencies in this region, there are currently no additional staff available.

I would like to thank you for your patience as there are currently frequent occasions on which staff are absent due to illness and we are doing our utmost to keep things running as normal as possible as we continue to believe that face to face education is our top priority. This may mean a delay in responding to communication compared with more normal times, as staff are used to cover additional duties and deliver teaching in addition to their own roles.

Should staff illness absence deteriorate further and we are in the position whereby we cannot supervise and teach every class, then we would reluctantly have to proceed with a partial opening plan. I am writing so that you can consider the potential impact of such a plan on your childcare arrangements should the plan need to be enacted.

If there comes a point where it is not possible to provide cover for all lessons, the plan for partial closure would be to ask Year 9 in the first instance to remain at home for distance learning using tasks through Satchel One. This would be reviewed on a daily basis, as absence levels change, and will be kept for as short a period of time as possible. If this time period extends beyond two days, a rotation of year groups would be arranged, prioritising the exam year groups for face to face learning and trying to spread the impact across the others. Teaching staff released from classes by this process would then be used to cover for

absent colleagues of those year groups in attendance or to set and mark work on Satchel One for those who are learning at home.

I sincerely hope that we will not need to implement this partial opening plan, however, I would rather be open with parents and carers about our current staff absence pressures so that should the worst happen, which might come at very short notice, you understand the rationale and circumstances, although we will of course endeavour to give you as much notice as possible, should circumstances conspire against us.

Yours faithfully



Mr Scott Yalden
Headteacher