



# BENFIELD SCHOOL

PRIDE IN PERFORMANCE



Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> December 2020

Headteacher: Mr Richard Carr

Dear Parent/Carer

I write to you as we approach then of the first term here in school and look forward to the Christmas holiday.

I would like to inform you that the academy will close on **Friday 18<sup>th</sup> December 2020 at 2:00pm** for all students. This will remain the case unless the Department for Education update their current guidance to schools.

In the final afternoon of term, students will take part in festive activities before being dismissed by year group in a staggered and safely orchestrated way. Any student requiring to remain on the school site until 3:00pm can be supervised until this time. Full school uniform *must* be worn by all students on the final day of this term. Students who have PE on this day can attend as usual in PE kit.

The school will re-open to all students after the Christmas holiday on **Monday 4<sup>th</sup> January 2021**.

We have worked very hard here within school since September in what have been different circumstances for both students and staff under new arrangements this term. I am pleased to inform you that we have continued to minimise risk as much as possible and numbers of positive COVID-19 cases amongst staff and students continues to be very low given the large number of people here on the Benfield site each day.

Our students and staff have shown great resilience throughout this first term. As the first term of the current academic year here draws to a close, I would like to take this opportunity to share with you some of the many developments which have taken place since September in what have been very challenging circumstances due to the COVID-19 pandemic:

- All students received delivery of our catch-up Recovery Curriculum
- Assessment of all students in all subjects took place in Week 5 and student scores have enabled teaching staff to identify and address gaps in learning for every individual student
- Remote Learning was launched for every student and in November was expanded via use of Microsoft TEAMS for any student who is absent from school or carrying out self-isolation
- ICT Devices for students without access to one to help support remote learning were provided
- Our COVID-secure Risk Assessment document continues to be reviewed and updated weekly
- PPE has been provided for all staff and students and additional handwashing facilities have been installed across the site
- Additional furniture in year group catering areas was installed to improve the student experience
- Replacement of all student seating in Year 9 to improve comfort levels for students
- The expansion of our new Key Stage 3 and 4 Student Progress provision to support students who require assistance and additional staff
- The appointment of additional Benfield School Attendance staff to support students and families in improving attendance/supporting student welfare during COVID-19
- The expansion of our Key Stage 3 Benfield ELITE Football Academy to three year groups
- Increased cycle storage following student requests (separate for Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4)
- Increased numbers of student toilets, now separated for use by different student year groups
- Continuation of increased student access to the school counsellor to support well-being during COVID-19
- Key Stage 3 Vulnerable Learner member of staff appointed to deliver an alternative Key Stage 3 curriculum

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**[www.benfield-school.co.uk](http://www.benfield-school.co.uk)**



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Over the past term, we have once again continued to challenge every area of school life in our demand for improvement. This has included addressing and supporting student attendance levels during COVID-19. We have also seen improving student attitudes to learning as students became familiar with the new safety measures and expectations to maintain safety on site. In addition to this, we have continued to increase our focus upon mental health and well-being support in reaction to student needs around COVID-19, as well as continuing to promote equality and diversity across the school through Benfield's strong inclusive approaches.

Most students this term have been exceptionally good at wearing the correct uniform, both on days when they have PE and on non-PE days, and we expect this to continue next term. You can help us by reminding your child of the school's expectations regarding appearance and conduct, particularly taking note of the fact that mobile phones must not be used in school (phones are allowed for use with the NHS Track & Trace app by anyone on site aged 16 years and above) and that only a single pair of sleeper earrings are an appropriate piercing set for students to wear whilst on the school premises. The correct, formal school shoes must also be worn.

I would also like to request your support reminding students about safe conduct if using public transport, including Walkergate Metro Station, and the need for social distancing and correct use of PPE face coverings whilst on the platform and train carriages. This will help support Benfield's collaborative work with NEXUS.

May I please request that doctor or dental appointments are made after 2:00pm wherever possible, ensuring that you provide medical evidence (letter or appointment card) for any medical related absences.

I also value greatly the support from all parents and carers in ensuring that our students attend school on time each and every day.

At the end of this term we say thank you and a Benfield farewell to a small number of staff who are leaving the school. Mrs Willis (Director of Learning – Science), Mr Robinson (Technology), Miss Goh (Art), Mrs Rickard (English) and Miss Batista (English) will all be leaving Benfield. I look forward to introducing our new members of staff joining the school in January.

#### **What to do in the event of a positive COVID-19 confirmed case during the Christmas holiday**

During the Christmas holiday when Benfield School is closed, The NEAT central office will be operating track and trace on 21st, 22nd, 23rd and 30th December.

**NEAT Central office: (T) 0191 2284090**

Please make contact on the telephone above if there has been a positive test within your household. Track and trace will then be undertaken by staff in order to make contact with any confirmed close contacts.

Finally, may I take this opportunity on behalf of everyone at Benfield School to wish you and your family our very best wishes over the festive period. Please remain safe and have a wonderful holiday.

Yours faithfully



Richard Carr  
Headteacher