



Head Teacher Newsletter

22 January 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

We have started our Covid testing programme and so far have tested the majority of students who are currently attending school. Those staff working in school are being tested on a daily basis. However, the Department For Education (DFE) has just announced a temporary halt to this process, as recommended by Public Health England (PHE). This is due to the spread of the new Covid variant and PHE have asked for more time to look at evidence of the effectiveness of daily testing as opposed to isolation. We will follow government guidelines on this when they provide us with further updates.

The school continues to be open for key worker and vulnerable students and I have attached the DFE criteria for both groups at the bottom of the page. The vast majority of our staff and students are working from home and our remote learning plan continues to improve, with an even greater variety of online lessons on offer. We also have paper based work that can be collected from school if required.

As we move through the pandemic, it is essential that we try and keep our transmission rates to a minimum, protect the NHS and save lives and we strongly recommend that students stay at home and work remotely at present. We appreciate the strain this may place on parents/carers and we are working with those families who require any additional support.

There is no further news on the Year 11 examination process as this is still at the consultation stage. Information will be shared with you once final decisions have been made by the government .

[Children of critical workers and vulnerable children who can access schools or educational settings](#)

Ian Noble
Head Teacher

Free School Meals

As the voucher scheme will be up and running by Monday 25 January 2021 there will be no food available in school – students entitled to free school meals must bring a packed lunch. If students arrive without a packed lunch parents will be contacted and food will have to be dropped off at school or your child will be sent home.

School Maintenance Works

Week commencing 8 February 2021 we will have essential maintenance being carried out in our bistro area. Students in school will eat their packed lunches in an alternative break out area for this week only. There will be no access to this area and alternative routes around school will have to be used.

School Laptops

After contacting all parents/carers to survey students access to IT at home, we have secured an extra 98 laptops to support the most disadvantaged students with remote learning. These laptops shall begin to be issued next week but must be collected and the loan agreement signed by a parent/carer. The families who requested support should check their emails for information as to how and when to collect student laptops from reception. In order to reduce risk, and ensure social distancing, we shall endeavor to invite families in at specific times. Please ensure that you communicate with the school, through the website, if you are unable to attend at the allocated time. If your circumstances have changed and you no longer require assistance, then please let the school know and these valuable resources can be repurposed to support other students.

There have also been a number of private donations by parents, former students, local businesses and further education establishments. These laptops and tablets are being cleaned and repurposed in order to be allocated to other students who have requested IT support. This IT support makes a huge difference to students who may not meet the DFE's criteria for a Government laptop but who still need our support to enable them to make good progress and access learning. If you or your employer has any IT such as laptops, desk tops, tablet devices or high quality smart phones which are no longer used, and you are willing to donate to be repurposed, then please contact school through the website with details. We can arrange for collection of devices where required. These donated devices shall make a huge difference to students who may have to share devices with siblings or whose circumstances may have changed recently due to the pandemic.



January 2021

Dear Stakeholder,

I am writing to inform you about our plans to carry out a two-week Major Line Closure on the Tyne and Wear Metro system next month so that we can replace overhead lines.

The work, which forms part of the *Metro: all change* modernisation programme, will see large sections of wire renewed in the busiest part of our network between Heworth and South Gosforth.

These works are vital to secure the future of Metro for many years to come and to ensure the network is ready for our new trains in 2023. They are part of an ongoing investment of £30m in new overhead lines across the network.

To deliver this project in the safest, most cost effective and least disruptive way possible we need a 14-day Major Line Closure, meaning:

- **No Metro services between Heworth and Regent Centre / Four Lane Ends from Monday 15 February to Sunday 28 February.**

Services will resume as normal on Monday 1 March.

A high-frequency and accessible replacement bus service will run in the areas where Metro trains themselves are not running. Full details of the timetables will be announced on Monday and will be available on www.nexus.org.uk

There is no good time to close a large section of the network, and this modernisation work can only be undertaken effectively during an extended closure period. I apologise in advance for the inconvenience this will cause.

The current lockdown means that passenger numbers on Metro are much lower than normal. While we have been planning these works for months the lockdown offers a good opportunity to carry out this vital work with less impact on our customers. We have created safe systems of work for our own employees to ensure this can go ahead safely

Overhead wires are critical for the Metro system to operate. They are where the trains draw their high voltage power from.

The power lines in our central area are ageing. They face the most wear and tear on a daily basis and they need to be replaced as soon as practically possible, which is why this work is booked in for February.

During the closure Metro trains will still be running in other areas, including: Airport-Regent Centre; St James-Four Lane Ends (Monument east/west remains open); Heworth-South Shields; Heworth-South Hylton.

If you require any further information about this important programme of work then please do not hesitate to contact me or go to www.nexus.org.uk.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Martin Kearney'.

Martin Kearney
Chief Operating Officer