



25 September 2020

Dear Parents

It is incredible that we are not even four full weeks into the term because so much has happened. We are all constantly adapting to changes here in schools, as we are all having to do in our private and work lives. I know that, for some families, this continues to be a time of huge strain and uncertainty; we will continue to work with you as much as possible.

We are, however, very pleased with how the pupils and students have returned to school life. Overwhelmingly, they are positive and showing a real desire to get back to their routines and they are taking learning seriously. This has made such a difference to this “new school-life normal” for everyone. I took a cover lesson this week and it was a real pleasure - the students were excellent in every way possible.

With regard to coronavirus, all our schools are implementing their extremely robust risk assessments and keeping them under constant review with the Trust. Coronavirus is, however, very pernicious and whilst no one in the Trust ever wants to close schools, especially given how much our children and young people need continuity, we will always prioritise safety. Since the start of term, the numbers of cases of coronavirus nationally are rising and, inevitably, this is impacting on schools across the country, including within the Trust. I wanted to reassure you again that, every time we are notified of a positive case of COVID-19 in a school community, school leaders contact Public Health England (PHE) and the Department for Education (DfE) who take the lead in advising the school about next steps. I know, listening to colleagues within the Trust and outside, that the decisions made to how schools respond illicit a range of opinions from parents. Whilst these are overwhelmingly supportive, a tiny minority are inappropriate and hurtful. I would stress that PHE and DfE recommendations are made on the basis of careful collaborative evaluation of each case given the setting and the control measures in place, and that schools follow PHE and DfE advice to the letter.

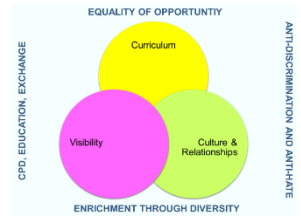
Where we have had to send pupils/students home to isolate, we ensure that learning continues so that they are not disadvantaged during their isolation period. Schools have very clear plans for this which can be found on their websites.

We should like to thank all members of our community for supporting the school at this time, and we send our thoughts to those who are unwell and wish them a speedy recovery.

On a positive note, we have had some very good news this week as Maiden Erlegh School has been shortlisted for the Times Educational Supplement's School Award for Secondary School of the year. Congratulations to everyone at the school for this fantastic achievement:

I have also been dipping into the various virtual parents' evenings, open evenings and information evenings. I am constantly in awe of how school staff are adapting to new ways of working and finding ways to keep things going. More than that, however, it is the quality of this work that astounds me. Well done to everyone.

Last term we started our Diversity & Inclusion project and I spoke to a number of staff and governors. This has given us a clear steer for three strands of our work which has started this term. Headteachers and others will be involving pupils and students to get their voice in the mix too. Last term I asked if parents would like to contribute their views. If you would like to do so, please email me via ([v.boatman@maidenerleghtrust.org](mailto:v.boatman@maidenerleghtrust.org)).



I also shared with you last term also the main objectives of our revised Trust Strategic Plan. I share them again for your information.

 <p><b>Educational Standards</b></p> <p>Excellence of provision leads to continuous progress, exceptional outcomes and high-quality destinations.</p>	 <p><b>Culture &amp; Environment</b></p> <p>Safe, ambitious and inclusive approaches lead to happy and resilient learners and staff, who respect and value each other and are confident to debate, innovate, take risks and learn from mistakes.</p>	 <p><b>Leading &amp; Developing People</b></p> <p>Ethical leadership, exemplary professionalism and high-quality professional development and support mean that Maiden Erlegh Trust is the employer of choice for the local area.</p>	 <p><b>Growing &amp; Developing our Community</b></p> <p>A strong track record of highly effective and sustainable school improvement, system leadership and professional partnership lead to more learners and staff benefiting from Maiden Erlegh approaches.</p>	 <p><b>Operational Effectiveness</b></p> <p>Our expert, efficient and values-led Central Services and focused and rigorous leadership lead to Maiden Erlegh Trust and its schools being financially strong, well-resourced and securely and sustainably managed.</p>
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All the very best to everyone.

Yours sincerely



Mary Davies  
Chief Executive Officer

## **Letter to parents from Public Health England**

23 September 2020

Dear parents and guardians,

This is an important letter to share some information on how we can work together to make sure we can continue to give children and young people the best education in the safest way possible.

One important part of ensuring the safety and wellbeing of pupils, parents and our communities is testing for coronavirus. We all have a duty to make sure that the right people have access to get tested at the right time. Every time a test is used inappropriately, a person with Covid-19 symptoms may miss out on getting tested.

Therefore, I ask that you all follow these principles:

- You should only book a test if your child has any of these three coronavirus symptoms:
  1. **a high temperature:** any new high temperature where your child feels hot to touch on their chest or back (you do not need to measure the temperature)
  2. **a new continuous cough:** coughing a lot for more than an hour, or three or more coughing episodes in 24 hours
  3. **a loss of, or change in, sense of smell or taste:** a noticeable loss of smell or taste or things smell and taste different to normal
- Your child **does not need a test** if they have a runny nose, are sneezing or feeling unwell but do not have a temperature, cough or loss of, or change in, sense of smell or taste because these are not normally symptoms of coronavirus.
- If you are unsure about whether to get a test, please check the official list of symptoms on the NHS website, which is reviewed regularly: [www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/symptoms/](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/symptoms/)
- Only the person with symptoms should get a test. You do not need to get a test for anyone else in the household unless they also have any of the three symptoms listed above. All members of the household need to self-isolate whilst waiting for the test result.
- If the person with symptoms' test comes back positive, other members of their household should continue self-isolating for 14 days and **only get a test if they develop coronavirus symptoms.**
- If a pupil in a class or bubble tests positive for coronavirus, anyone who is advised to self-isolate **does not require a test unless they subsequently develop symptoms.**

No one else in the same class or bubble as the symptomatic person needs to take any action unless advised by the school. Schools have detailed guidance and access to a Department for Education and Public Health England helpline for advice and support.

Contacts of a person who has tested positive must follow the guidance carefully and in full, which means they must stay at home for 14 days. This is because it can take several days following contact with an infected person before an individual develops symptoms or the virus can be detected. Students should only book a test if they get symptoms.

The NHS has produced some guidance to help parents understand when their child can and cannot attend school which you may find useful: <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/>

It is vital for children's learning and future opportunities that they are able to return to school and college. It is therefore vitally important that all we work together and do our bit to make this possible.

Yours sincerely,

**Professor Viv Bennett CBE** Chief Nurse  
and Director Maternity and Early Years |  
Public Health England  
Head of World Health Organisation  
Collaborating Centre for Public Health  
Nursing and Midwifery  
Follow me on Twitter: @VivJBennett

**Dr Susan Hopkins**  
Interim Chief Medical Officer | NHS Test &  
Trace  
Deputy Director | Public Health England  
Consultant in Infectious Diseases &  
Microbiology  
Royal Free, London

Please can we ask you to help us by following the above principles and also:

- Keep talking to your children about the things we can all do to help reduce the risk of the virus spreading:

*-wash your hands with soap and water often – do this for at least 20 seconds*

*-use hand sanitiser gel if soap and water are not available*

*-wash your hands as soon as you get home or if you have used public transport*

*cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze*

*-put used tissues in the bin immediately and wash your hands afterwards*

- Where students are wearing face-coverings, please can you ensure that your child understands how to wear and dispose of them safely. Bins are provided in school for disposable masks and children should bring bags to keep their face coverings apart from other belongings.



**If your child has:**  
a runny nose, is sneezing or feeling unwell  
**But they don't have:**  
a high temperature  
a new, continuous cough, or  
a loss of, or change in,  
sense of smell or taste

**These are not normally symptoms of coronavirus**

Seek advice from a pharmacy, dial 111 or see your GP

**If your child has:**  
a high temperature  
a new, continuous cough, or  
a loss of, or change in,  
sense of smell or taste

**This could be a sign of coronavirus**

**Book a test**

I include two useful links if parents or carers would like further advice:

**NSPCC:** <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/coronavirus-advice-support-children-families-parents/>

**DfE Guidance for parents:** <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/coronavirus-advice-support-children-families-parents/>