



Steel City Schools Partnership
Registered Office: Montenev Primary
Montenev Crescent
Sheffield
S5 9DN
www.steel-city-schools-partnership.org
Chief Executive Officer: Nicola Shipman

Thursday August 27th 2020

Dear parents/carers,

Re: Full reopening plans update for September 2020

Following revised government guidance regarding the reopening plans for September 2020, on behalf of the trustees of SCSP, I wish to update you about the work that has taken place during the summer break and actions you will need to take and follow to ensure a safe return to school.

The opening of schools is a crucial step to ensure that children get back to learning and, in turn, you can return to work and, as much as possible, to life as we knew it pre COVID. We must however remember that the measures needed to make sure that this return to school is safe have needed to be carefully planned and now followed by all who use the school – pupils, parents, staff and visitors. We have followed all government and health advice in putting our risk assessments and reopening plans together. We will also continue to review our plans in light of any new advice.

For some of our children, families and staff, the return in September will be the first time they have been in school since March 20th, so we know whatever we do needs to be managed carefully and sensitively. Across SCSP we recognise the importance of this so have detailed reopening plans and procedures that we must follow at each school. For those of you who had children in school in June and July these plans are different so please make sure you are aware and understand the up to date plans.

It is important you know that failure to follow the reopening plan and risk assessments has the potential to put not only your child/children but other children and staff at risk so you must follow the school plans in place. The last thing we want is for a local (class or year group bubble) lockdown, so by playing your part at home and at school, and by following the social distancing guidelines in the community, you can help us keep your child, other children and staff safe whilst at school. We will follow all national guidance in relation to possible cases of COVID19. Your child's schools will share with you via their website the flowcharts that explain what would happen in the event of positive cases of COVID or a spike in staff or pupils showing symptoms at school.

As a trust we have registered to be able to access COVID tests for staff and pupils at any school in SCSP. We have already had families take up this option for testing in July and they have reported that getting the test was quick, within an hour or so, with results back within 24 hours. In the event of your child showing symptoms, we would ask you to use the provision available to us. You would need to contact the school office as soon as possible and then school leaders would action this for you, through the trust portal. All we would need would be your name, child's name and contact details. Whilst we would action the test for you, I want to reassure you that we do not receive the outcome of any test – either positive or negative. The results come directly and only to you. It would be your choice to share the outcome of the test with us. Clearly if a test is negative your child would be able to return to school, so I expect you would be keen to ensure your child misses the least amount of time possible from their education. If a test were to be positive knowing this, I feel, is critical to ensure the school takes the right action as soon as is possible.

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Leaders across SCSP have met virtually during August to ensure plans for September meet the very strict requirements for reopening. You will soon receive an update from your headteacher about the site specific reopening plan for your child/children's return to school. If you have any questions about any aspect of the return to school, please do not hesitate to contact your school through the usual channels – class dojo, email or text message. Please remember that visits to the school site are not allowed unless by pre-arranged appointment.

Given the incredibly difficult situation we have all faced over the past 6 months; we are aware that the return to school may prove difficult or emotional for some children, as well as for some families. I want to reassure you that each site has carefully considered what additional support children and families may need, so again speak to your school about this. We also know that many of the children are ready and excited to return to their new class and learning. Staff and leaders are really looking forward to welcoming them back.

As I reflect on the last 6 months as CEO of SCSP I still, at times, struggle to comprehend the impact the COVID19 pandemic has had on our schools, our staff and your children. Never in my 30 years in teaching have I experienced anything like the last 6 months and do not want to have another 6 months like it again. I want to thank you once more for bearing with us during the summer term and understanding that, at times, decisions we made seemed very late but this was often due to information being received in short timescales that were out of our control. I also accept that social media often provides conflicting and confusing messages, so I also urge you to keep reading the information sent out from school. We will continue communicating with you on a regular basis and if we need to make further changes to our plans, these will be communicated to you as quickly as possible. In order to ensure all communication gets to you if you have made any changes to your contact details, such as mobile number or email address, please make sure you inform the school office of these changes as soon as possible. It is critical we have your up to date contact details. This also includes the contact details for all emergency contacts for your children.

As we are now getting close to returning, I sincerely hope that by continuing to keep safe, by following our plans in school and maintaining social distancing and following local advice in the community we can, as much as is possible, ensure that our full return to school in September is as COVID safe as possible. I urge you to please play your part in this and thank you in advance for doing so.

May I also take this opportunity to wish you a relaxing August bank holiday weekend and I hope you enjoy the last few days of our summer break with family and loved ones. I look forward to seeing your children back at school, safe and well, very soon.

Yours sincerely

Nicola Shipman Chief Executive Officer

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