



## **Pensby High School**

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Headteacher: Mr K Flanagan

10 March 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

This is just a short letter before we bring all students back tomorrow to let you know that school is ready to welcome back your children. However, can I start by giving my thanks to all of the volunteers, their help has been vital, my staff, you as parents, as your support is as ever invaluable and please pass my thanks on to your children. It has not been an easy year for anyone, but seeing the students come in for testing was lovely, but it has really brought home the time we have lost. I cannot believe how much you can grow in such a short period of time.

Tomorrow we will start at the normal time, with students returning to their year group bubbles. Form time will be extended through lesson 1 and I will hold a series of assemblies over the course of the day. Please remind your children that we need to maintain the system of controls we had in place before the last lockdown and enhance them. We are doing this to try to minimise the disruption going forward, I dread the thought of phoning still more parents to tell them that we have a positive case and their child is a close contact, we need to start as we mean to go on and that is in the firm belief that school will stay open.

To help with this we will be wearing face coverings when we are in the building, all areas of the building. We have a small number of students for whom wearing a mask is not possible and these students will be given a form of identification and will not wear a face covering. They are medically exempt and parents have provided evidence to this effect.

Let me be absolutely clear, I do not want to wear a face covering, but I am going to wear a face covering as I have chosen to be part of a community. In choosing to be part of that community, I accept that at times I will have to follow decisions made in the best interest of the whole community, even if they are not decisions I wanted. I follow these decisions willingly, because I am stronger by being part of a community; everyone is stronger by being part of our school community. Whilst the DFE have been less than helpful in their wording of guidance, we have assessed risk within our school and we have done so on the basis that we want education to be open to everyone and to be open to its fullest extent. However, I have a duty of care to minimise risk for everyone in my community and the evidence is clear that wearing a face covering helps to slow and lessen community transmission.

We owe it to each other to take all the steps we can take to protect each other in what is the middle of a global health pandemic, especially whilst we still have clear warnings that there could be another spike in infections driven by a return to school.

I thank the handful of parents who have written to remind me that even if their child does not wear a mask they must receive an education. I have read the evidence provided by some with a mixture of amazement and concern, but I do respect your position. However, the guidance does not say that a child's education must be in a classroom with their peers and whilst we have the overwhelming support of our community with regard to wearing masks, it may be necessary that for the two or

three students whose parents fear that their rights are being infringed, their children's education is away from their peers.

We will always seek to take the 'bubbles' at break and lunchtime outside of the school buildings and then no masks need be worn. Unfortunately there are not enough staff to have year group areas inside and out, so please send your children in to school in a coat so that we can keep students outside whenever possible.

The dining halls are reopening from tomorrow using the previous rota, please make sure that accounts are topped up, preferably online. We are looking at how we can bring back a break service, but this is not currently possible whilst we are maintaining the year group bubbles.

I know that all the staff here want your children back and into lessons, a school is not a school without children.

Thank you for all the supportive messages over the last few months, they have really helped, thank you for all the support in general.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in grey ink, appearing to read 'K. Flanagan', with a stylized, cursive script.

Kevin Flanagan  
Headteacher