

26<sup>th</sup> February 2021,  
 Dear Parent/ Carer

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[www.twhf.org.uk](http://www.twhf.org.uk)

Term 4 update from the WHF Special school sector- Nylands, St Luke's and The Peak Academy

I am writing to let you know the provisional plans for the return of all students to school, announced by the Prime Minister on Monday this week. As ever, these plans are subject to change and further clarification. The announcement was that all students will be returning to schools in England from 8 March. However, there is an expectation that Secondary age students will be tested for Covid-19 three times upon return and that students should only return to the classroom if the most recent test is negative.

Given the inevitable challenge of delivering testing, schools have been given license to phase return for students over the first week. Below I've outlined my plan for the Special schools return during lockdown 3. Following the recent government update, the guidance is clear we should encourage attendance of all vulnerable pupils. However, I am aware there are many anxieties to overcome which will require different phases. The diagram shows each one of these phases and I have marked where we currently reside and where we are moving towards.

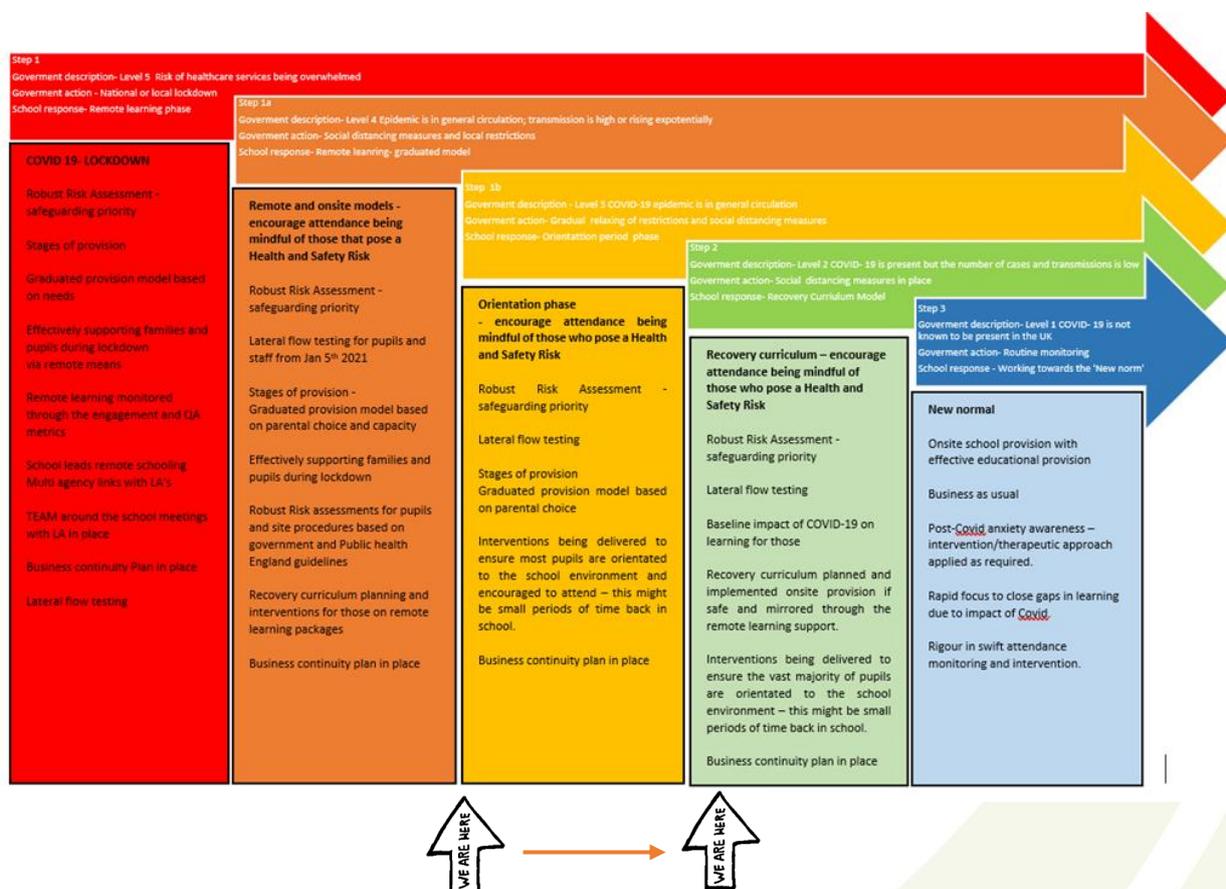


Diagram: step plan to support the widening of provision in WHF special schools in line with Government measures.

This is an ambitious plan which will bring students back to school as quickly and as safely as possible. Testing is optional, but we would strongly encourage **Secondary age students** to be tested. The purpose of the testing is to identify anyone who may be carrying the virus before returning to school. Students testing positive will be asked to isolate in line with government requirements. Students who do not have a lateral flow test will not be prevented from returning to school. After this, students will be issued with home testing kits after having 3 onsite tests and be asked to self-test twice each week. I should emphasise at this point that the above steps are set out by government policy and will apply to all secondary schools in England.

### **Conditions of return**

The system of control in place in school is broadly the same as it was in the latter part of the Autumn Term. Staggered breaks, zoning and bubbles will remain in place until at least Easter. Students will be required to observe the one-way system, regularly sanitise their hands, and avoid mixing outside of their year group wherever possible. A significant change is that **Secondary age students** will be required to wear face coverings in all indoor spaces, including in lessons (with the exception of PE). This expectation has been made by government and we believe it is a sensible, short term additional precaution. We expect the requirement to wear face coverings in lessons to be relaxed soon after Easter. We will continue to review this within our specialist provision.

### **Behaviour**

It is imperative that we all work together to ensure students fully respect the systems and procedures and do not put others at risk by not following the rules. This includes excellent behaviour and utilising the specialist support and guidance we have in our specialist provisions.

### **Attendance**

It is a requirement that all students attend school. However, clinically extremely vulnerable students should not return until shielding is lifted. Should you have any questions about your child's attendance or concerns about household members who have been advised to shield, please contact your child's school. Getting children back to school is a national priority which we fully support. The local infection rates are below national average and falling. By the date of return, it will be unlikely that someone in school will carry the virus. The additional measures will mitigate this risk further. I am therefore confident that a full return to school is manageable. With this in mind we remain steadfast in our 3 pledges below.

We promise 3 things **"The White Horse Pledge"**

1. Covid safety at all times
2. High quality educational delivery
3. Well-being of staff and pupils

If at anytime you feel we can improve, please don't hesitate to contact me or the Principal and we can work together. Of course, if you feel we are doing a good job please let us know. Its nice to hear positives as well.

Lastly, your child's welfare continues to be our highest priority during face to face support and when studying at home. All our staff are working as normal and are available for advice and support. Please let us know if there is anything which we should be aware of or can help with. The weeks ahead are going to be difficult for all of us, but better days are coming.

If you have any questions, please contact me or the schools.

I very much look forward to welcoming your children back to school during term 4.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R Lewis', written in a cursive style.

Richard Lewis

Director SEMH, The White Horse Federation/ Principal, The Peak Academy