



# Atlantic Academy Portland

an Aspirations Academy

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3rd November 2020

Dear Parent and Carer

We very much hope that you have had an enjoyable and restful half term week, despite the poor weather.

As you are no doubt aware, the Prime Minister made an announcement on Saturday explaining that much greater restrictions are going to come into effect for the whole of the country from Thursday 5th November in the form of a second national 'lockdown'. Should your financial situation change, please contact Ms Fowler [zfowler@atlantic-aspirations.org](mailto:zfowler@atlantic-aspirations.org) who can advise and guide you through Free School Meal applications which will enable you to access further government support should it become available, especially over the Christmas Holidays; we would like to offer whatever support we can.

This is a worrying time for everyone, but by constantly reviewing the Covid safe procedures in school we aim to bring reassurance, stability and a sustainable approach to delivering your child's education. We understand that this is going to be a difficult time for many members of our community. Let us all hope that the infection rate is significantly decreased by this second lockdown and we can all come out of this safely on the other side. Please help us and our community by ensuring your children understand how these new measures will affect them in the evenings and weekends. With regards to school, we would like to make the following points:

## Face Coverings

As we are currently in 'Tier One' the wearing of a face covering has not been mandatory in secondary schools. However, we are waiting for guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) as to whether the new rules from Thursday 5th November will change this. It seems likely that the wearing of a face covering in indoor areas of greater congestion e.g. moving between lessons in the corridors, will become mandatory from Year 7 onwards. As soon as we receive clarification we will let you know, but if your child does not already have a suitable face covering, it would be sensible to ensure they are prepared.

Thank you to all parents who come on site who are ensuring that they wear a suitable mask or face covering; this will continue for the foreseeable future.

## Track and Trace

We were extremely fortunate that we did not have to close any school bubbles during the course of the last half term. Should we receive a positive test result from a student or member of staff we have a number of stages to follow. Dorset council will be informed and in addition we have to call the Department for Education COVID advice line. After discussing the details of any case with the helpline, we are required to follow the guidance from the Department of Education and Public Health England as they are the experts in this area. At this point we will let students/parents know if there are implications and if they are required to self isolate and for how long.

These decisions would not be taken in isolation and, as stated above, we would follow the instructions of healthcare professionals. By the same token, we are not permitted to share any information if it has not been deemed appropriate to do so. Of course, anonymity for any affected individual and their family must always be guaranteed. If you have any queries about a potential case that is worrying, please use the [appropriate forms on the website](#)

**Can we please request that students and parents refrain from using social media to speculate and comment on potential cases**, as this can be unhelpful and cause inaccurate information to be spread. It could be very upsetting for any family affected. Thank you for your support with this matter.

### **Attendance**

Please note that attendance at school remains compulsory. In the case of an issue linked to Covid-19, the occasions when a student must not come to school are as follows:

1. They have received a positive test.
2. They are self-isolating as either they, or a member of the household they live in, has symptoms of Covid-19. Students must not come to school and must self-isolate if any member of their household is symptomatic.
3. They have been contacted by 'Track and Trace' as having been in close proximity to an affected person. They must stay in self-isolation for the time period specified by the Track and Trace Officer.
4. You have been contacted by Atlantic Academy to inform you that due to a positive case of a student or member of staff who has been in close proximity to your child, that they need to remain at home and self-isolate for the specified timeframe.

In the case of one of the above affecting your child, please ensure that you do the following:

- Contact Mrs Sonia Martin (Attendance Officer) by phone 01305 820 262 or email: [smartin@atlantic-aspirations.org](mailto:smartin@atlantic-aspirations.org) giving the reason for absence.

### **Concerns about a family member**

We understand that there are some circumstances where families are extremely concerned about sending their child to school due to a fear of them potentially bringing the virus home. We can only say that whilst they are at school we are doing all that we can to mitigate the risks. Regardless of the family circumstances, it does remain the case that attendance at school is compulsory. Students who have to remain at home for one of the four reasons above are coded as 'X'. This is a new national attendance code meaning their attendance record is not affected. In any other cases of non-attendance, schools have been advised that it has to be coded as unauthorised.

Thank you so much for the information from those of you that have had to self-isolate/test during the first half term. Please do not apologise for taking such supportive actions as preventing the spread of this virus is the key and is more important than anything else. If you have any of the three main symptoms:

- New and persistent cough
- Loss of taste or smell
- High temperature

Please do self-isolate and arrange for a test. You are not causing a problem- you are preventing one. It may be that in the coming days and weeks further changes are introduced and this could include the wearing of face coverings in corridors and lessons for some year groups. We will do our best to be proportionate, but we will always act with the best interests of students and staff members in mind while adhering to Government guidance.

Thank you for your continued support. We will be in touch again soon when we have received clarification on aspects of the guidance.

Yours sincerely



Mrs L Bishop  
Principal of Secondary



Miss M Heppell  
Principal of Primary