

18<sup>th</sup> December 2020

Dear Parents/Carers and Staff,

### Updates

- We are sure you will be aware of the Government's most recent sudden announcement, to rollout mass testing for COVID-19 in Schools from January, starting with Secondary aged pupils in mainstream and special schools, before extending the programme to Primary aged pupils later in the year.
- We are waiting to receive further information from the Government and KCC regarding the logistics of how they envisage this working in practice. Nevertheless, we are being as proactive as we can at this point, by extensively researching testing procedures and guidelines, consulting with other professional bodies and drafting potential management plans. We will keep you up to date regarding future developments.
- The Government has indicated that most pupils should not attend School during the week of 4<sup>th</sup> January, to allow Schools to prepare for a phased return and for pupils to be "*tested ahead of normal schooling resuming.*" However, the Government has also stated that "*All specialist settings and alternative provision schools or settings should plan for full-time on-site provision for all pupils from the start of term.*" **As we are a specialist setting, and all of our students have EHCPs, the staggered opening at the start of the New Year does not therefore apply to us.**
- The Government has emphasised that "*the children of critical workers.....are expected to access on-site education provision from each school's advertised first day of term and should be prioritised for testing.*" All of our staff are critical workers and are therefore expected to make the necessary arrangements to enable them to be available for work. **Staff must liaise with their children's School as a matter of urgency in order to ensure that they secure prioritised provision for their child from 4<sup>th</sup> January.**
- The Government has advised that "*Schools that wish to can use an extra INSET day on 4 January to prepare to deliver the testing*". Due to the nature of the challenges we face in organising testing procedures, and the very short notice that we have been provided with, we will be taking up this offer. **The 4<sup>th</sup> January will therefore be an INSET day for staff. We will re-open for pupils on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> January 2021.**
- Our responsibilities for contact tracing continue through to the 23<sup>rd</sup> December. Please continue to liaise with our track and trace team if a pupil / staff member begins to present with symptoms or tests positive during this period [trackandtrace@five-acre.kent.sch.uk](mailto:trackandtrace@five-acre.kent.sch.uk)

Thank you for your continued support and understanding throughout these extremely challenging times.

Take care all and have a lovely Christmas.

### The Senior Leadership Team

