



Together Students Achieve

Principal: Mr Paul Willerton

23 February 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

Many of you will have heard the news that secondary schools will be reopening on Monday 8 March. This is excellent news and we are looking forward to students returning to their education on site. The guidance was only published after the announcement in parliament yesterday and so I will write a more detailed letter regarding the logistics of returning to the academy at a later date; but for now, please find some important details below.

When students return to site, the systems and structures will nearly be identical to those in place before Christmas. All of the measures that the academy previously put into place are part of the guidance now. These include a staggered start and finish time, separate breaks, increased cleaning, year group bubbles etc. The two major changes will be around the use of facemasks and testing. The guidance does go into more detail than the official announcement, particularly around testing. Please read the below details and complete the consent form as soon as possible. This will help us in planning the academy reopening.

Use of Facemasks

Facemasks are already compulsory at the academy when in any communal area. To add an additional safeguard, this will now be extended to classrooms. This means that students will be required to wear a facemask, unless exempt, in all areas inside the academy building and when entering site. Please contact the relevant Head of Year if your child is exempt.

Asymptomatic Testing

The academy is being asked to test all students three times using the asymptomatic lateral flow test on their return to education, with each test being 3-5 days apart. Students will be able to attend full time education after their first test. Information on the tests can be found within the attached document. Once all three tests have been completed, students will then be provided with their own tests kits. They will then continue to test themselves at home twice a week.

To make the return of students as safe as possible, we do ask that parents give their consent for their child to be tested. This will reduce the chances of a student returning who is asymptomatic (not showing symptoms) and passing on the virus. The guidance is very clear, testing is not compulsory and if a parent wishes to not give consent that should not stop the student having access to their education. Those students where consent is not given, they will return to the academy at the same time as the rest of their year group.

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Those parents who have already given consent, do not need to complete the form again.

Due to the volume of students at secondary schools, the Department for Education have allowed for a staggered return during the w/c Monday 8 March, to enable testing to take place. Due to the capacity of the testing centre at the academy being quite large, we are hopeful that the stagger will be quite minimal. More details of this will be sent out at a later date.

Please can we now ask that you complete the online consent form [HERE](#). If you have more than one child at the academy, please complete the survey for each child. This will cover each child for all three tests. Please ensure that you enter the mandatory fields of parent/carer mobile phone number and email address.

If you do not wish to give consent, please do still complete the form, but select consent not given. This will enable us to only support and contact those parents who have not yet given consent, rather than those who do not wish to give consent. Please complete this as soon as possible so that the academy can then start making plans for the students return.

I understand that for some students, returning will be causing some anxiety. If so, please do not hesitate to get in touch so that the academy can put in any support that may be required.

Yours faithfully



Mr P Willerton
Principal

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Lateral Flow Testing

Those taking the test will be supervised by trained staff. The 'lateral flow tests' are quick and easy; using a swab of your nose and throat. Students will self-administer the test with guidance from staff.

Results (which take around half an hour from testing) will be shared directly with staff and students participating. Where participants are under 16, parents or legal guardians will also be informed.

In validation studies conducted by Oxford University and Public Health England, they were shown to be as accurate in identifying a case as a PCR test (99.68% specificity). The tests have lower sensitivity but they are better at picking up cases when a person has higher viral load, hence the need to test frequently. Testing will be offered free of charge.

What if a student tests positive?

Participating staff and students who test positive will be informed about their results individually. Where participants are under 16, parents or legal guardians will also be notified. Guidance on safe travel and additional precautions will be provided along with test results.

Students/Staff will **not** need to take a further 'PCR test' (similar to those done in local and regional testing sites). They will need to self-isolate for 10 days, with the first day being the day of the test. The household will also need to self-isolate for 10 days, as will close contacts.

What happens if the test is negative?

They will be able to stay in the academy and resume their activities as normal. A student will only be told if they test positive on a 'lateral flow test', so if they do not hear anything from us they should assume that the test was negative. A small number of students may need to repeat the test if the first test was invalid or void for any reason.

What if a close contact at school/college tests positive?

A close contact of someone in school/college who has tested positive for Covid-19 will need to self isolate for 10 days. This will not impact on your child's attendance and their lessons will be provided on Satchel One. If your child needs to self-isolate due to being in close contact, you do not need to self-isolate.

What if my child develops symptoms?

This testing programme at the academy is for people with no symptoms. If your child develops symptoms at any time (such as a high temperature; a new, continuous cough; or a loss or change to their sense of smell or taste) they must not attend the academy. They must immediately self-isolate and book a test by calling 119 or by visiting <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>.

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