

3 March 2021

Dear parents and carers

As you will be aware from the news and conversations with us, from 8 March all schools will be open and attendance is mandatory. At our academy, we have been open to all children since the beginning of the year anyway and many of your children have been coming in, which has been wonderful to see. We now look forward to having everyone back in school and being together and supporting each other as we get back to some form of normality.

This letter is to tell you about a few things to be aware of before your child's return to school next week.

1. Testing for pupils (and staff)

During the week beginning 8 March, the government have said that all secondary age pupils will be offered asymptomatic testing on site (and staff will be continuing to test but from home). As testing has been in place in our school since the beginning of January and all staff and pupils who have been on site have had twice weekly tests, we know that this is working well in building the confidence of everyone at school. From 8 March, your child will be offered 3 tests on site, 3-5 days apart. We are currently working out the timetable for testing to make sure that we can test all pupils at the same time as providing onsite and remote education – your child's coach will be in touch with you directly to talk about timings and when your child should be at school and when they may need to be at home accessing our remote learning programme.

Once your child is tested, if the test result is negative, they can be at school. If the test is positive, your child and household will need to self-isolate in line with the guidance for [households with possible coronavirus infection](#).

Consent for onsite testing – we must get consent from you for testing onsite. Many of you will have done this already at the beginning of the year. If you haven't done so already, please [click here](#) to complete the consent form. We can guide you through this consent form if you have any questions.

Testing at home – the government have advised that once pupils are sufficiently confident about testing, there is the possibility that tests can be carried out at home supervised by an adult. During the first week we will review how onsite testing is working and will talk to parents and carers, and children about this as it may be possible to continue testing onsite should we all think this is in the best interest of the pupils.

2. Testing for households and bubbles of school pupils

The government also announced at the weekend that families of primary and secondary school age pupils can get access to rapid tests they can use at home from now onwards. If you wish to start testing from home, you can get tests in a number of ways: through your employer if they offer testing; at a local test site; by collecting a home test kit from a test site; or by ordering a home test kit online. The guidance on this is available [here](#). This is not administered from school, but if you have any questions about the guidance we may be able to help.

3. Face coverings

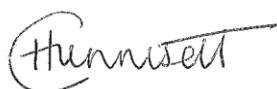
Guidance from the DfE about face coverings has been updated for 8 March for secondary schools and they have recommended that in addition to wearing them in communal areas, face coverings are worn in classrooms unless social distancing can be maintained. In primary settings, face coverings should be worn by staff and adult visitors in situations where social distancing between adults is not possible (for example, when moving around in corridors and communal areas) but not in classrooms. Children in primary school do not need to wear a face covering. The DfE have clarified that this face covering guidance is not compulsory.

In our experience over the last year, staff and pupils have generally been able to maintain social distancing in our communal areas and classrooms, especially as our class sizes are relatively small. As you know we have also put in place many other control measures to prevent the transmission of the coronavirus in addition to twice weekly testing of everyone. Other measures include regular prompts throughout the day regarding washing hands and keeping social distance, ensuring ventilation in the rooms with windows and doors open whenever possible, asking visitors to wear face coverings, and regular cleaning of spaces throughout the day.

Therefore we will not be making face covering wearing compulsory in classrooms or communal areas but we will support anyone who wishes to wear one to do so. Face coverings should continue to be worn on the minibus and in taxis when travelling to and from school. Our guidance will be kept under regular review as always.

Once you have read this letter, if you have any questions or concerns about your child coming back to school, please do get in touch with us to go through them. We will be calling you later this week to confirm arrangements for 8 March onwards and really look forward to having as many pupils as possible back at school for the rest of term!

Best wishes



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