

**Headteacher:** Dr. J Bartlett – NPQH, PGCE, D.Phil, M.Chem **Specialisms:** Mathematics

18<sup>th</sup> December 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope my message finds you safe and well.

It is likely that you will have already heard the news that schools and academies across the country have been asked by the government to arrange a phased return for students in the first week of the new term. This is so that we have time to prepare for the rollout of COVID-19 testing for our students and staff from the first week of January.

You will no doubt have many questions, all of which we have attempted to answer below. However, please note that we await the full guidance on testing, which will be shared with you as soon as we have it. As always, please get in touch if anything is unclear.

### **Which students are expected back in academy on 5<sup>th</sup> January 2021?**

Our vulnerable children, the children of critical workers and all students in year 11 are expected back in academy on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> January (please note Monday 4<sup>th</sup> is a staff INSET day). All other students should not attend the academy that week and will be taught remotely (see below) until they return on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> January.

### **Why have we been asked to take this phased approach in the first week of term?**

A phased return in the first week of term will give us the time we need to prepare the academy to carry out COVID-19 testing. To minimise the impact of the virus on our ability to educate our children in academy, we will be able to test staff weekly and have daily testing of both staff and students who are close contacts of a positive case, to avoid the need to have people self-isolate where it isn't necessary.

### **How will testing work?**

Our students and staff will be offered what are known as lateral flow device tests. These devices can help identify people who have high levels of the virus but may not be showing any symptoms. They are quick and convenient, allowing results to be delivered in under 30 minutes.

The tests will be administered by trained personnel and will be carried out in line with our strict safety measures, which include social distancing, good hand and respiratory hygiene and keeping academy spaces well ventilated. Please bear in mind that we do not yet have the full guidance on testing, which will be shared with you as soon as we have it. For more information on the lateral flow device test, click [here](#).

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### Are the tests compulsory?

Whilst participation is optional, we recommend that students and staff are tested as figures show that one in four people who have COVID-19 never display any symptoms but may be infectious. We will be contacting parents and carers about permissions in the first week of term when we will also have more guidance on testing.

### Remote education arrangements for students

We have plans in place which mean that our students can continue their learning without disruption from 5th January using Microsoft Teams. They will have daily contact with their teachers and will continue to be taught a wide range of subjects in line with their academy timetables where possible. We will be taking a daily register and our teachers will continue to closely monitor progression, adjusting pace or difficulty of work where necessary. Unless a student is identified as vulnerable, a child of a key worker or in year group 11 they will be expected back in academy on Monday 11th January.

### Who should I inform if my child tests positive for the virus over the Christmas holidays?

The process of notification differs slightly as we progress through the holidays:

- If your child or someone else within your household tests positive for COVID-19 between now and Wednesday 23 December: please let the academy know by emailing the details to [shenley.enquiry@e-act.org.uk](mailto:shenley.enquiry@e-act.org.uk).
- If your child or someone else within your household tests positive for COVID-19 between Thursday 24 December to Sunday 3 January: please follow contact tracing instructions provided by NHS Test and Trace and email the details to [absent@e-act.org.uk](mailto:absent@e-act.org.uk)

### Thank you for your support

I appreciate this news comes very late in the term following yesterday's government announcement, so I take this opportunity to thank you for your patience and understanding during these unprecedented times. We very much appreciate your support. As always, please get in touch with any questions or concerns.

Kind regards,



Dr J Bartlett  
Headteacher