

Dear parents/carers,

I said that I would write to you when we had further information and we have a few things to update you on as well as addressing a few queries I have had. I will split the main messages into two areas: those relating to testing and the return of all students to the academy and arrangements for the awarding of Year 11 and Year 13 grades.

Testing and all students returning to the academy

Thank you very much for the for those of you have given consent for students to be tested on site as part of their return to the academy. Being able to identify and isolate any asymptomatic cases will undoubtedly make the academy a safer place for all students and staff. If you have not yet given consent and would like to then please use the following link: <https://tinyurl.com/yyacwrjv>. You need to give consent by the end of today (Friday 26 February) so that on Monday we can firm up our plans for the testing schedule we have already drafted.

We will begin the process of testing students on Monday 8 March. Following a negative result, they will be straight back into lessons. As I said earlier this week, we are hoping to be able to have all students tested and back in lessons by Thursday 11 March. I will write to you early next week with the schedule as I know you need time to organise things. As soon as we have definite numbers we can confirm our schedule.

To confirm, key worker children and vulnerable students who have been accessing on site provision will be able to continue to do so and we will slot them in to our testing.

I have had a couple of queries in relation to self-isolation and students who have tested positive for COVID in the past 90 days. I know that the documents provided talked about serial testing as an alternative to close contacts of positive cases isolating, however; Public Health England and NHS Test and Trace have now stated that lateral flow tests cannot be used daily for close contacts (as was suggested at the start of January) and therefore if your child is a close contact of a positive case then they will need to isolate for 10 days from their last contact. As I said, we hope not to be in this position but unfortunately it is something that we all have to be aware of and prepared for. The guidance also states that someone who has tested positive in the last 90 days may be at risk of recording false positive results in future tests. Therefore, if you have given consent/are going to give consent and your child has tested positive in the last 90 days then can you please let us know by emailing: office@macademy.org.uk so that we can ensure that they are not tested on site.

Awarding of grades to Year 11 and Year 13 students

Yesterday, we received the long-awaited guidance about the exact arrangements for awarding grades to Year 11 and Year 13 students. Whilst, there are still further details to be released, what we know is very encouraging and we think it is the fairest thing that could have happened in amongst all that our students have been dealing with. Students will be awarded grades by the academy; whilst the guidance and press speak of 'teacher assessed grades,' the grades that we award will be agreed by us following an internal quality

assurance process and they will not be the sole responsibility of any one member of staff. The grade will draw on a range of evidence including homework, class work, home learning and the results of any tests or mock examinations that have been set and the grade will be a reflection of what students know, understand and can do. We will need to submit grades by 18 June and we have until then to gather as much evidence that we can. I know some students are asking about leaving dates and mock examinations etc. We want to get students back from 8 March and then we can take it from there. As was suggested, examination results day have been moved. Y13 results day will now be Tuesday 10 August and Y11 results day will be Thursday 12 August.

I look forward to writing to you next week with the testing schedule and reminders about the routines that students will have to follow once they are back in the academy. Whilst this week has been full of announcements and logistical planning, we are all very much looking forward to the students being able to return to us very soon.

Take care,
Mrs R Coning
(Head of School)