

Dear parents and carers,

Happy New Year to you all. I hope that you have enjoyed a lovely Christmas break and that COVID has not ruined too many of your plans or made any of you too unwell. Please find below a reminder about the arrangements for on-site testing and the start of term:

Year group	Test	Return to the academy
11x band	Wednesday 5 January 8.30am	Thursday 6 January
11y band	Wednesday 5 January 9.15am	Thursday 6 January
10x band	Wednesday 5 January 10.45am	Thursday 6 January
10y band	Wednesday 5 January 11.30am	Thursday 6 January
13	Wednesday 5 January 1pm	Thursday 6 January
12	Wednesday 5 January 1.45pm	Thursday 6 January
8x band	Thursday 6 January 8.30am	Friday 7 January
8y band	Thursday 6 January 9.15am	Friday 7 January
7x band	Thursday 6 January 10.45am	Friday 7 January
7y band	Thursday 6 January 11.30am	Friday 7 January
9x band	Thursday 6 January 1pm	Friday 7 January
9y band	Thursday 6 January 1.45pm	Friday 7 January

Students need to arrive 10 minutes before their test time. **Students do not need to wear their uniforms for testing.** Apologies, I did not clarify this in writing before Christmas. On arrival to the academy for their test, students need to go straight to the main dining room. Each time slot lasts 45 minutes so if you are bringing your child and are waiting for them then the maximum amount of time they should be is 45 minutes. Once students have had their tests they will leave the site.

All students start the academy at the normal time on the day that they return to the academy.

I am sure that you have seen in the press that the government has introduced new measures for schools to follow. Please see a summary of the new guidance below:

Testing

Students should be tested on site at the start of term. Following this, all staff and students should be completing tests at home twice per week. We will ensure that students are issued with tests to bring home.

National guidance has changed to say that even if someone has tested positive for COVID-19 within the last 90 days, they are strongly encouraged to take part in LFD testing at home once they have completed their isolation period for their prior infection. This is a change to previous guidance.

Face masks

It is recommended that face coverings are worn in classrooms where pupils in Year 7 and above are educated. The advice is short term only and will be in place until Wednesday 26 January, at which point it will be reviewed.

Isolation times if positive

Individuals may now take lateral flow tests on day 6 and day 7 of their self-isolation period. Those who receive two negative test results are no longer required to complete 10 full days of self-isolation.

The first test must be taken no earlier than day 6 of the self-isolation period and tests must be taken 24 hours apart. If both these test results are negative, and you do not have a high temperature, you may end your self-isolation after the second negative test result and return to your education setting.

Close contacts

People who are fully vaccinated, or children and young people aged between 5 and 18 years and 6 months, identified as a close contact of someone with COVID-19, should take an LFD test every day for seven days and continue to attend their setting as normal, unless they have a positive test result or develop symptoms at any time.

Staff shortages

As I am sure you can appreciate, employers in all sectors are currently facing issues of staff shortages and we are no different. We will monitor staffing levels closely, and will let you know as soon as possible if we need to put contingency measures in place. Although we hope to avoid this, we may have no choice but to ask a year group to learn from home.

I know that it still feels that we are in a period of uncertainty but we have successfully navigated our way together through the pandemic over the past almost 2 years. We are all very much looking forward to the students returning to the academy; I hope they are just as excited to be coming back!

Yours sincerely,

Mrs R Coning
Headteacher