

Dear parents and carers,

I hope that this letter finds your families well and that you have had an enjoyable summer break. I am sure that you are turning your attention to the start of term and so I wanted to send you some reminders. Most of the information in this letter is a repetition of information in the letter that I sent in the last week of term. I ended that letter by saying that the guidance could well change but by and large it hasn't changed very much at all.

Start dates for each year group and COVID testing

In line with government guidance, students will be tested twice (3-5 days apart) on their return to the academy in September. To enable us to do this we will need to stagger the start of students by year group. The following year groups are to be welcomed back on the following dates at the usual time of 8.20am:

- Monday 6 September: Years 7 and 12
- Tuesday 7 September: Years 7, 8, 12 and 13
- Wednesday 8 September: Years 7, 8, 11, 12 and 13
- Thursday 9 September: Years 7, 8, 10, 11, 12 and 13
- Friday 10 September: All year groups

On Monday, Year 7 students will be directed to the dining room for a welcome assembly. Years 8-11 will need to make their way to the theatre for their welcome assemblies on their first day back. Students will be issued with their timetables on their first day in the academy and they will all have some time in their tutor groups to go through this as well as some other key messages.

Testing on site will only be for those who have consented. If your child tests positive on one of these tests then we will be in touch with you. Following these initial two tests, the advice is to resume twice-weekly lateral flow tests at home. Government guidance says that this will be reviewed at the end of September. I will send further information about this, including information about the distribution of tests, in the next couple of weeks.

Start and end times (including before and after school)

All students will need to be on site for 8.20am as lessons will start at 8.30am. Tutorial has moved into the middle of the day and therefore it is essential that students are not late for lessons. We are continuing to have a slightly staggered end to the day and we will have different entrances for different groups of students.

Year group	End time	Gate to enter/exit the academy
7	2.40pm	Main student gate
8	2.45pm	Main student gate
9	2.50pm	Main student gate
10	2.45pm	Student gate further along Stockton Road
11	2.45pm*	Student gate further along Stockton Road
12	2.45pm	Dunstable Road gate (near Baristas)
13	2.45pm	Dunstable Road gate (near Baristas)

*Year 11 will finish at this time for the first week back only week only. From Monday 13 September there will be a compulsory period 6, further details are below.

On Monday-Thursdays we have added an extra period on to the day for Year 11 students. This period will be taught and will be a great opportunity for students to start to catch up on some of the learning that they have missed out on. This is compulsory for all Year 11 students and will start from Monday 13 September. We will also use this period 6 for enrichments and other intervention/ catch up sessions. Students will find out more about this in September.

Paying for snacks at break and for lunches

You will need to ensure that you use School Gateway to top up money on your child's account as we do not want them bringing cash on site. The loading machines will not be in use. If you do not already have a Gateway account you need to email: office@macademy.org.uk and you will be sent the information that you need to register.

Arrangements for PE

Students need to arrive and leave the academy in full uniform. PE kit must be brought with students.

Updated COVID guidance

The recognised symptoms of COVID continue to be:

- a new continuous cough
- a high temperature
- a loss of, or change in, your normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia)

If your child has any of these symptoms please do not send them to the academy, they should isolate and be taken for a PCR test.

Test and trace and self-isolating procedures

Since 19 July, schools are no longer required to undertake contact tracing. NHS Test and Trace will work with the positive case and/or their parent to identify close contacts. Contacts will only be traced by NHS Test and Trace where the positive case and/or their parent specifically identifies the individual as being a close contact. As an academy, we will no longer be contacting you about positive cases.

From 16 August, children under the age of 18 years old will no longer be required to self-isolate if they are contacted by NHS Test and Trace as a close contact of a positive COVID-19 case. Instead, children will be contacted by NHS Test and Trace, informed they have been in close contact with a positive case and advised to take a PCR test. There is no requirement to self-isolate while awaiting PCR test results and so students can attend the academy as usual.

18-year-olds will be treated in the same way as children until 6 months after their 18th birthday, to allow them the opportunity to get fully vaccinated. At which point, they will be subject to the same rules as adults and so if they choose not to get vaccinated, they will need to self-isolate if identified as a close contact.

Anyone who tests positive will still need to self-isolate for 10 days from the start of symptoms (or the date of the test if there are no symptoms).

Face masks

Since 19 July, face coverings are no longer advised for students, staff and visitors either in classrooms or in communal areas. Obviously, if students want to wear a face covering then that is fine.

Other changes from last year/COVID measures

The main change from last year for students is that rather than them having base classrooms for the majority of their lessons, they will return to moving around the academy between lessons. We will ensure that there is staff presence on corridors to ensure students get used to this again.

Whilst we are all looking forward to trying to get back to more normality we understand that there may be some anxiety about students returning to the academy. There are some measures that we have kept in place to try to reduce the spread of COVID:

- We will continue to try to ensure that those with symptoms do not attend the academy and go for a PCR test
- Enhanced cleaning will be in place
- We will continue to emphasise good hygiene with lidded bins in classrooms and tissues and sanitisers readily available for students to use
- We will try to keep all rooms well ventilated with windows and internal doors open (when it is practical to do so)
- We are continuing to use different gates to stagger students' entrance and exits to the academy
- We are staggering lunch time to try to reduce the number of year groups on lunch at the same time and where we can we are continuing to use different facilities at break and lunch to try to keep different year groups apart.

I hope that the students are all looking forward to starting or returning to the academy; I imagine that you all are on their behalf! We at the academy cannot wait to get started for an academic year which will hopefully bring with it more normality. I sincerely look forward to working with all students and parents/carers this academic year.

Take care,
Mrs R Coning
(Head of School)