

31<sup>st</sup> December 2020



Principal **Nick Martin**  
BSc, MA, PGCE, NPQH

## Returning to the Academy after the Christmas break & COVID-19 testing for students and staff

Dear Parent / Carer

I hope you have had a safe and restful break. These continue to be uncertain times and we are working tirelessly to ensure we can provide your child with a safe environment when we reopen in January. Following yesterday's announcement regarding the delayed reopening of schools, please find below details of when your child will physically return to the Academy.

**Year 13 & 11** will return to site from **Monday 11<sup>th</sup> January 2021**

**Year 9, 10 & 12** will return to site from **Monday 18<sup>th</sup> January 2021**

However, the Spring Term will start online, as per our calendar, on **Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> January**.

If your child has any scheduled examinations week beginning 4th January these **will take place** as calendared and we expect your child onsite. Once their examination is completed they will need to leave the school site as soon as possible. Please ensure appropriate arrangements are made.

### Remote Learning

From Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> January **Year 11 & 13** lessons will be delivered live and online via Google Meet, providing your child's teacher is not unwell. If the teacher is absent, independent work will be set and published via Google Classroom.

From Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> January **Year 9, 10 & 12** lessons will follow our remote learning policy. Students will follow their normal timetable with a minimum of 50% of lessons delivered live and online via Google Meet. For the remaining lessons, work will be set and need to be completed independently. This will mean we will have time to effectively train staff to carry out the Lateral Flow Tests (LFT); test staff and students for COVID and, cover key examination classes should teachers or dependents be unwell.

During tutor time on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> January (8:20am), all students will meet online with their tutor. This is an opportunity to ask any questions about remote learning, start dates and plans for between 5<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> January. Your child should log in to Google Classroom and access the Google Meet link published by their tutor shortly before the session. To access their Google classrooms students should visit [www.classroom.google.com](http://www.classroom.google.com) and login using their @mybest.org.uk email.

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Following tutor time on Tuesday, your child should then follow their usual school timetable, accessing the relevant Google Classroom. For Year 9, 10 & 12, in the majority of subjects, we will try to ensure that the first subject lesson of the week will be live and online. This will allow the teacher to explain how lessons will run for the remainder of the week and outline the activities when independent work is to be completed.

All Students will have a weekly Head of Year (HOY) assembly and their HOY will publish which morning this will be via their tutor Google Classroom.

### Monitoring Engagement

It is very important that students in Years 11 & 13 engage with the live, online lessons. The teacher delivering the lesson will take a register within the first 10 minutes of the lesson. Please note, if your child is late to login, they will be marked as absent. We will be monitoring your child's attendance and the year group team may be in contact if we feel your child is disengaged with remote learning and/or there is a pattern of absence. You will be contacted to discuss how we can work together to support your child during this difficult time, as we feel it is essential to keep you informed during any partial closure of their engagement with the work provided. To that end, we ask that if your child becomes unwell you inform the Academy via the usual channels, so this can be recorded appropriately. Please email [amartin@bestacademies.org.uk](mailto:amartin@bestacademies.org.uk) or call 01462 629900.

### Vulnerable & Critical Worker Provision

The Academy from Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> January will be running an onsite critical worker and vulnerable student provision. A list of those who qualify for the provision can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision>

Those on site will form **one bubble** from Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> January to Friday 15<sup>th</sup> January. They will be based in a classroom and access the live lessons / independent work in line with their peers, rather than have any face to face teaching. If your child has been identified as vulnerable, we will contact you directly on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> January and confirm if you wish to access our provision. For those of you classified as critical workers who feel it necessary to access the onsite provision, we ask that you contact Mr Rowell directly via email [trowell@bestacademies.org.uk](mailto:trowell@bestacademies.org.uk) to confirm arrangements. Please note that the provision for children of critical workers is to enable critical workers to continue to work. We would ask that you only use this provision if you feel that your child cannot safely work from home.

When attending our onsite provision we ask that your child bring in their own set of earphones. They should enter via the main reception gate and wear full school uniform. They will be asked to sanitise their hands on entry and throughout the day. We ask that you provide your child with a packed lunch. If your child is eligible for free school meals, we will provide them with a packed lunch. No hot food will be provided during the first week of term.

### COVID Testing

COVID Testing for those without coronavirus symptoms is being rolled out across the country in education settings using new, quicker COVID-19 tests known as 'lateral flow tests' in January. The aim is to identify asymptomatic COVID carriers and protect our community by reducing the spread of the virus.

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Along with all our current protective measures, these tests will help staff and students to remain in school safely. Up to one third of people who have coronavirus experience no symptoms. By testing we will help to stop the virus spread and help to keep our school open as safely as possible. The test is voluntary, but I would encourage everyone to take it. Please login to EduLink and complete your child's consent form by **Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> January 2021**. Please note that if your child is identified as a contact of a student that has tested positive and we do not have consent to complete the lateral flow test, they will need to self-isolate for the full 10 days, as per Government guidance.

We are planning to initially test all staff and consenting Year 11 and 13 students in the week commencing 4<sup>th</sup> January 2021. This will ensure that staff and these year groups can return safely for face to face lessons week beginning 11th January. We aim to test Year 9, 10 & 12 students week beginning the 11th January, prior to their return on Monday 18th January. We will be writing to each year group separately regarding when and how the testing will take place.

I have attached an instructional leaflet with further information and ask that you discuss this with your child prior to their test.

**If you are happy for your child to be tested, please fill in the form via EduLink by Wednesday 6th January.**

Those taking the test will be supervised by trained staff. The 'lateral flow' tests are quick and easy using a swab of your nose and throat. For under 18s, staff will oversee the swab process, but students will complete the test themselves.

Positive results will be shared directly with staff and pupils participating. Where participants are under 16, parents or legal guardians will also be informed. If positive, the student will need to be collected from site to self-isolate. You will need to book a PCR test via the usual means (details can be found in the FAQs section at the end of this letter). Once the Academy site reopens for onsite provision and following a positive case, we will identify students who have had direct and prolonged contact with the positive case and continue to test these students daily. If you have not consented for your child to participate, then we will be asking for your child to be collected from site.

The rapid test validation studies have been conducted by Oxford University and Public Health England, they were shown to be as accurate in identifying a case as a PCR test (99.68% specificity). The tests have lower sensitivity but they are better at picking up cases when a person has higher viral load, hence the need to test frequently.

Please find below some FAQs regarding COVID testing.

As you can appreciate these are difficult times for education settings who were made aware of the government's testing plans and delayed reopening at the same time as the general public. I wanted to take this opportunity to thank each of you who has offered kind words over the Christmas break and volunteered to support us further. Your on-going support is a continued source of strength for all at Samuel Whitbread. We will be in contact early in the New Year with further information.

Kind regards  
Mr N Martin  
Principal

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## **Key Questions**

### **What if a pupil tests positive?**

Participating staff and pupils who test positive will be informed about their results individually. Where participants are under 16, parents or legal guardians will also be notified. Guidance on safe travel and additional precautions will be provided along with test results.

A pupil will only be told if they test positive on a 'lateral flow' test, so if you do not hear you can assume it was negative. A small number of pupils may need to repeat the test if the first test was invalid or void for some reason.

Pupils will need to take a further 'PCR test' (similar to those done in local and regional testing sites) on the same day (or as soon as possible) - [www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test](http://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test) or call 119 to book a follow-up test. When arranging a PCR test yourselves, you should choose to visit a drive-through test site if possible, as it is faster than requesting a home test.

During this time while they wait for the PCR result (via text / email) they will need to self-isolate.

If the PCR test returns a positive result you will have to self-isolate and follow the guidance from NHS Test and Trace.

### **What happens if the test is negative?**

They will be able to return to school and resume their activities as normal, as will any identified contacts. At this point the daily testing of contacts would cease.

### **What if a close contact at school/college tests positive?**

A close contact of someone in school who has tested positive for COVID-19 will be able to remain in school if they agree to be tested once a day for 7 days and the test is negative. If they do not want to take the test, they will need to self-isolate as per the national guidelines. This does not apply to household members or close contacts outside of school who will still need to self-isolate. Further details will be provided at the time, but if you would prefer to self-isolate instead of doing daily testing, you can.

### **What if my child develops symptoms?**

This testing programme at school is for people with no symptoms. If your child develops symptoms at any time (a high temperature; a new, continuous cough; or a loss or change to their sense of smell or taste) they must immediately self-isolate, and book a test by calling 119 or visiting <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>

