

26<sup>th</sup> February 2021

Dear Parents/Carers

I wanted to write to you following the announcement by the government earlier this week about the reopening of schools, week beginning Monday March 8<sup>th</sup> 2021.

We are really pleased to hear that we will be able to safely bring all students back on-site beginning on this date and we have been carefully reviewing the guidance and making the necessary arrangements and amendments to our routines to enable this to happen.

We expect that the majority of students and families will also welcome this announcement as we know how keen everyone is, to get back to school with all the benefits not only academically but also in the mental health and wellbeing opportunities it affords students. We also recognise that this change may be daunting for some and we want to reassure you that we will follow guidance carefully and always make the safety of our whole school community our number one priority.

Our highly skilled pastoral team will work directly with families over the coming days, where we know this will help to ease the transition back to school and reassure them. If you would like to speak to someone, please don't hesitate to contact the school.

The week beginning 8<sup>th</sup> March will include a staggered return to school to allow for the mass testing of all consenting students to be carried out in advance of their return. Students who are still at home during this staggered phase will continue to be fully supported by the ongoing remote curriculum. In the meantime, if you wish to do so and have not yet completed the consent form for testing then you will find it here <https://www.whitleyacademy.com/>

Please ensure that it is returned to school before the end of the day on Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> March, in order for us to be able to make appropriate arrangements for the testing programme.

If you would like to read the Department for Education guidance sent out to schools this week, a full copy can be found here:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/963509/Schools\\_coronavirus\\_operational\\_guidance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/963509/Schools_coronavirus_operational_guidance.pdf)

We expect the phased return to roll out as follows:

Date	Friday 5 <sup>th</sup> March	Monday 8 <sup>th</sup> March	Tuesday 9 <sup>th</sup> March	Wednesday 10 <sup>th</sup> March	Thursday 11 <sup>th</sup> March	Friday 12 <sup>th</sup> March
<b>Testing by appointment for students with consent</b>	Y11 Y12/Y13	Y10	Y9	Y8	Y7	
<b>Students in school for face-to-face learning</b>	No students in school.	Y11 Y12/Y13	Y10 Y11 Y12/Y13	Y9 Y10 Y11 Y12/Y13	Y8 Y9 Y10 Y11 Y12/Y13	Y7 Y8 Y9 Y10 Y11 Y12/Y13

Cont....

Appointments for those who have consented to be tested in school, will be issued via email. Students who have been attending school as children of critical workers will remain in school throughout the phased return and should continue to attend as normal. All other students will be in school every day from Friday 12<sup>th</sup> March onwards. I hope you will appreciate the importance of us beginning the return with Y11-13 as a priority first, in order that we are able to begin assessing progress and providing appropriate intervention where required. There is a real, tangible opportunity now, for students in Y11-13 to influence their end of year results by working as hard as they possibly can on their return. Please encourage them to do just that, so that their teachers are able to reflect their effort and progress when assessing their final grades

Current public health guidance advises staff and students who are Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV) to stay at home and continue to shield as advised in their personalised letter from the NHS, *even if they have been vaccinated*. From 12<sup>th</sup> March 2021, attendance will be mandatory in line with DfE expectations. All children of school age should be attending school unless they are isolating because they:

- have had a positive result or have Coronavirus symptoms.
- live with someone who has symptoms or who has tested positive, or they
- are a close contact of someone diagnosed with COVID-19

Support will be offered to students who are self-isolating, shielding or vulnerable as appropriate to each individual.

From the 8<sup>th</sup> of March, secondary schools are expected to offer 3 Lateral Flow Tests to students who have consented, between 3 and 5 days apart. Schools have the flexibility to decide how to organise this based on their local circumstances (prioritising Y10-13). Following the 3 first *onsite tests* the plan will be to move to a home testing model for both staff and students. I will write again when these home test kits become available. Remember that testing is voluntary, however you should report all test results following the instructions to the NHS and additionally report any positive results recorded on the LFT device, to us at school, so that we are able to update contact tracing and isolation as required.

All schools are being encouraged to revert to their usual uniform policy when students return and to inform parents that school uniforms do not need washing with any more frequency than they would normally be washed or in any particular detergent. Therefore, we will expect all students to attend as scheduled above, in full school uniform as described in our uniform policy here: <https://www.whitleyacademy.com/about-us/school-policy/school-uniform/>

With regard to the health and safety of the school community once back in the building, it is expected that all students will wear a face mask in classrooms and communal areas where social distancing of 2m cannot be maintained. Face masks will not need to be worn outdoors. These measures will be in place until Easter, and reviewed by PHE/DfE at that point. Face visors or face-shields should not be worn in place of face coverings – they *may be worn in addition to face masks* but do not provide adequate protection when worn alone.

There are very few exemptions to the wearing of face masks listed in the DfE guidance and these are as follows:

- Those who cannot put on or remove a face covering because of a physical impairment/disability.
- Those who speak to or provide help to someone who relies on lip-reading, clear sound or facial expression to communicate.

*All secondary schools in the city* signed up to an agreement to follow this protocol earlier this week and therefore *all secondary pupils* will be expected to *wear a face mask* where social distancing is not possible. We will continue to maintain a supply of disposable masks in school to enable those whose mask becomes soiled or wet to continue to benefit from being in class. We appreciate your co-operation with this.

Cont...

Additionally, as a school we will continue to promote good respiratory hygiene – catch it/bin it/kill it. We will ensure that all communal spaces are well-ventilated. We will remind everyone about the expectations for hand-washing and hand hygiene. We will maintain an enhanced cleaning regime (which will now include the use of fogging machines where deemed appropriate and we will continue to follow Local Health Protection Team advice.

Free School meal vouchers for this week and next week will be issued early in WB 1<sup>st</sup> March. Please check that you have redeemed all previously issued vouchers as there are quite a number still outstanding! Free School Meals and normal break and lunchtime provision will begin again on site for all students as part of the phased return.

Once again, thank you for everything you are doing at home to help with learning and progress during this challenging and ever-changing climate. For now, please ensure your child continues to fully engage in the remote curriculum provided by their teachers and I will write again, next week with further updates linked to the LFT device home-testing kits and also, with more specific details of the plans for the management of GCSE/A Level assessment and grading later this summer.

Stay safe and well.

Yours faithfully,



Mrs K. Wright  
**Headteacher**