

26 February 2021

Dear Parents/Carers

I published a video on Monday outlining that we would be welcoming students back to face-to-face education in the week beginning the 8th March. Governmental guidance has changed on this over the course of this week. However, we are now in a position to confirm how we will approach the return to school in more detail.

Lateral Flow Testing & Return to School

Firstly, we are working to keep our school as safe as possible. You may have heard that testing for those without coronavirus symptoms is beginning across the country using new, quicker COVID-19 tests known as 'lateral flow tests'.

Along with the other protective measures we are taking, lateral flow 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 strongly encourage everyone to take it. **We will offer tests to all students from Wednesday 3rd March.** The specific time that your child will be tested will be communicated to you early next week. Students will attend school at a specified testing time and return home immediately after their test. They do not have to attend in school uniform for this short period of time. Students should continue with online learning in the usual way during this week. If your child attends the hub, they should attend as normal.

Following completion of the first test, **all students will return to school from 8.40am on Monday 8th March following their usual timetable.**

If you are happy for your child to be tested, you will need to fill in a consent form for each of your children who attends Workington Academy. These have been emailed to you, and can be returned by email. Please return the consent form, with the **student's full name and year group as the email title** to lfddtesting@workingtonacademy.org by **3.00pm on Monday 1st March**. The rota schedule for testing of each year group will be advertised early next week.

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.

Results will be shared directly with staff and students participating, typically within a two to three hour time period. Where participants are under 16, parents or legal guardians will be informed of the test result. Please be aware that testing large numbers of students can take a significant period of time. The Government's own data shows that 100 students may take up to 3 hours. All results will automatically be uploaded to the NHS Test and Trace system.

It is currently intended to test all students **three times** before 15th March. Thereafter students will be provided with resources to enable testing to take place at home. Further details on this will be shared later, when further guidance is available.

As testing will be taking place routinely, it is likely that more positive cases will be found so where students are not taking part in the routine testing it is likely that self-isolation will occur more frequently. I have tried to answer some of the most frequently asked questions below.

What if a student tests positive?

Participating staff and students who test positive will be informed about their results automatically. Where participants are under 16, parents or legal guardians will be notified. When a test is positive, your child will need to self-isolate for 10 days following government guidance.

What happens if the test is negative?

Your child will be able to return to school as normal as set out above. A student will be told if they test either positive or negative following their 'lateral flow' test. A small number of pupils may need to repeat the test if the first test is reported as invalid or void for some reason. The school will contact you if this arises and it is a simple follow up process.

What if a close contact at school tests positive?

If a close contact at school tests positive then, as in the autumn term, students will be required to self-isolate for 10 days.

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 (such as a high temperature; a new, continuous cough; or a loss or change to their sense of smell or taste or other symptoms identified by the World Health Organisation that are linked to Covid19) they must immediately self-isolate, and book a test by calling 119 or visiting <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>.

We will support our staff and students throughout, but please contact us if you need this information in any other language or format or if you have any questions. You can call the school's main reception on 01900 873926 or email office@workingtonacademy.org.

In the event that you do not want to consent to testing for your child you should still complete the form to submit that response. All data collected will be held within GDPR regulations.

Other Protective Measures

A range of protective measures are already part of custom and practise within the Academy, such as routine hand sanitisation, appropriate seating and "bubble" arrangements to help limit student contact and prevent the spread of the virus. All of these will continue, with a focus on strict adherence.

One further measure to help keep students safe will be that we will ask students to wear face coverings at all times during school, where 2 metre social distancing is not possible. We recognise that this is difficult for some, however the latest Government guidance is clear that for those not medically exempt from wearing a face covering this is now an important measure to which we must adhere, to help keep everyone safe. The recommended face covering is Type2 IIR. If you wish to discuss the wearing of face coverings, please contact your child's Director of Learning.

We are absolutely delighted to be welcoming students back into the Academy on 8th March. Please help us to keep our school community safe by encouraging your child to wear a face covering, take part in the testing and follow all of the guidance in and out of school.

If your child is feeling concerned or worried about the return to school on 8th March please contact your child's year group team. By working together, I know we will progress toward relaxed restrictions and a much more "normal" school experience.

Yours faithfully



Mr D Bird
Headteacher