

23<sup>rd</sup> February, 2021.

Dear Parents and Carers,

May I start by thanking you for your support over the past half term. I am very pleased to be writing to you with some positive news.

You will probably have seen or read the news stories about schools being asked to implement a return to school for all pupils **from** Monday 8<sup>th</sup> March. I am writing to you today to explain how we intend to respond to the government announcement.

In order to ensure that we can comply with government guidance regarding the need to conduct Lateral Flow testing (LFD) and ensuring the safest return possible, we will operate a **phased return plan from 8<sup>th</sup> March**. In essence this means it allows us to conduct one LFD test for each consenting student before they return to our academy. For us, this equates to thousands of tests we have to administer before students can return to school.

In summary, this means for us:

- The academy will continue to remain open for **vulnerable and critical worker** students, however from Monday 8<sup>th</sup> March these students will return to their original bubbles.
- A schedule of LFD testing and phased return for students will commence Monday 8<sup>th</sup> March (see plan below). Remote learning will remain in place during this period for when students are not in the academy.
- From Monday 15<sup>th</sup> March, all students should come into the academy as they did prior to this most recent lockdown and will remain in their same bubbles and staggered start/finish times.
- All consenting students will take part in two further LFD tests after they have returned.
- In addition to students wearing a face covering in communal spaces, students will now be required to wear face coverings whilst in the classroom (exemptions still apply), this is a temporary extra measure.
- School-led 'Test & Trace' will re-commence upon students return.

### LFD testing programme

Testing for those without coronavirus symptoms is now well established at the academy with over 700 tests already being carried out on staff and students, using lateral flow devices. As you will be aware, up to one third of people who have coronavirus are asymptomatic. LFD testing helps to reduce the spread in school settings through asymptomatic transmission. The government announced that students will need to have three LFD tests; one prior to students recommencing on-site provision. After the three on-site tests the latest government guidance is that parents/carers will be asked to test their children at home twice a week using rapid tests. At the time of writing this I am awaiting further clarification on how this will be rolled out.

I am strongly encouraging those students returning to the academy to be tested and if you have not already given consent please do so, using the following link, <https://forms.gle/A9aoxMjHofDD6uBs9> this will take you to a form where you have the option to consent or decline (you will also receive a text with this link). We require **ALL** students to complete this form (one form per student that attends the academy). We will continue to register students with NHS Test & Trace and the results will be shared directly with the person named on the consent form.

If a student tests positive on a lateral flow device test, they will be informed immediately by the academy and then will need to self-isolate for 10 days and follow the guidance from the NHS. We will notify you to come and collect your child.

