

25 February 2021

Dear Parents

As stated in my communication sent on Tuesday 23 February 2021, this letter contains more detailed arrangements for the return to school in the week commencing the 8 March 2021.

We have the task of testing potentially 1400 pupils three times within the first two weeks, with a follow up test being conducted at home. The guidance from the government, at the time of writing, is that students should not resume education until they have received their first test, which should be conducted from the 8 March 2021. This does not affect the option to decline consent to undertake tests. We shall not conduct any testing on students where consent has not been given and these students are free to return to school at the same time as those who have undertaken their first test. However, I would encourage parents to grant consent wherever possible, as the testing is another measure that may mitigate against the need for us to send large groups of pupils home to self-isolate for 10 days. I would like to believe that everybody has had enough of remote learning by now. If a student has had a positive Covid-19 test result in the last 90 days, the student should not undertake the test; please let the school know the date of the positive result so we have this for our records.

The consent form, which contains updated testing videos, can be found on our website:

<https://knoleacademynew.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/document/Consent-Form-for-COVID-19-Testing-February-2021.pdf?t=1614167072?ts=1614178653>

If you have already sent a consent form to our Assistant Head of Years, you do not need to do so again.

We intend to test students on a rota basis set out below. Students will attend school for only their test and should return home after. We would encourage parents to bring students at the allocated time slot and park in the main car park, from there students should follow the signs to the Oaks Theatre, entering via the rear doors where the testing will take place. We would ask that parents remain in their cars. Students will not be requested to remain until their results develop, we shall contact any parent where a positive test is recorded, and if you do not hear from the school then assume the test will have been negative. I expect the process to take no longer than 30 minutes per student. Please feel free to attend at any point within the window, as you can appreciate if every student turns up at the opening of each window the process will be slower.

Monday 8 March	
9.00am -11.00am	Year 7
11.00am-1.00pm	Year 11
1.30pm 3.30pm	Year 13
Tuesday 9 March	
9.00am -11.00am	Year 8
11.00am-1.00pm	Year 10
1.30pm 3.30pm	Year 12
Wednesday 10 March	
9.00am -11.00am	Year 9
11.00am-3.30pm	Catch up, all years

If you have children in multiple Year groups, we do not expect you to attend at different times, please bring them all to one of the relevant allocated slots and we shall accommodate all of them.

If you cannot make the time slot available, we have a catch-up window on Wednesday 10 March 2021 from 11.00am onwards.

School will return as normal on Thursday 11 March. On this date school buses should be running as normal, there will be a normal dining service and may I remind all students that they need to bring in all of the equipment they require to facilitate their timetable: stationery, books, locker keys and relevant kit where appropriate. The government have made it clear that attendance is mandatory.

The second and third school-based tests will be undertaken on a rota and students will be informed of this upon their return; we hope it will involve them missing no more than part of one lesson for each test.

I hope that the home test kits will be available for collection when students attend their initial test, if they are, we shall distribute the test kits to students to take home with them at this point. If they are not delivered in time, we shall distribute them when the school receives them.

I apologise that we cannot have students back in lessons on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday but we are utilising a large number of teaching staff to organise and conduct the testing. Remote education will continue for these three days, however, due to the testing schedule for both students and teachers there may be disruption to the number of live lessons. Key worker and vulnerable students may attend as normal and we shall arrange for their testing.

Masks

There has been a change in policy from the government that is initially intended to run from the 8 March 2021 to the Easter holidays, and will then be reviewed. It expects masks to be worn in all areas where social distancing cannot be maintained, this now includes classrooms. Therefore, students and staff will have to wear masks in this setting. However, there are some caveats, exemptions are still accepted and as per my previous communication, these should be addressed to kcupit@knoleacademy.org and an exemption badge will be issued. Secondly, if a class has low numbers such as many Sixth Form lessons, and if the seating plan provides for social distancing, masks do not need to be worn and the teachers will inform students if that is appropriate. Finally, and most importantly, if staff are teaching at the front of a room and have generated sufficient separation from the class, they will not need to wear a mask; this will hopefully mitigate against the issues that may occur for those students who are dependent on lip reading. If teachers are moving around a classroom, they will wear masks.

Yours sincerely,



David Collins
Headteacher