

February 26<sup>th</sup> 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

## **RE : Return to Face to Face Education and the Testing Programme**

I am writing to set out the details that will support all pupils returning to face to face education from 8 March.

This is further to the Prime Minister's broadcast on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2021 and the updated guidance for schools published by the Department for Education. Please read this letter carefully.

**In order to get all children back in school learning by Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> March we will begin the mass testing on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> March. It is essential that pupils turn up at the designated time.**

### **Asymptomatic Testing**

The government have confirmed that all staff and pupils will be tested prior to returning to the classroom, upon return, regular Covid testing will be in place to keep staff, pupils and our community safe. This will enable us to act quickly if a positive case is identified. We need to carefully manage the return as we will need to have a testing timetable in place for the whole pupil and staff body.

We have been testing upwards of 100 pupils and staff twice weekly since January and we understand the logistics of the process, including the need to maintain social distancing and support pupils with testing, hence the need to phase the return.

Rapid testing using Lateral Flow Devices (LFD)s will support the return to face-to-face education by helping to identify staff and pupils who are infectious but do not have any coronavirus symptoms. Pupils will be offered three tests, each test three to five days apart. This will then move to a home testing model after the third in school test has been completed. We will provide you with home test kits for regular testing and will post information and links on how to test on our website.

Many of you, understandably, did not complete the online testing consent form I sent out back in January as we went into lockdown and your children have been learning from home. However, it is now essential that we now have a response regarding consent for your child to be tested. To help us register pupils for the test efficiently, please can everyone complete the new online form as soon as possible. Testing has been carried out very successfully with staff and pupils on site to date. The tests will help to protect you, your family and others at school who may be more vulnerable, such as older members of staff like me!

Link : [Online Covid Testing Consent Form March 2021](#)

#### **Wey Valley Academy**

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Pupils will return to face-to-face education following their first negative test result in accordance with the details set out below:

Pupils who test on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> and Friday 5<sup>th</sup> will have their test **and then return home.**

All pupils receiving their first test on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> March and Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> March will remain in school for the full day following a negative test.

All students will be back fulltime from Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> March and throughout this first week, we will offer the second test as soon as possible by accompanying pupils to the testing room in teaching groups.

**Detailed times for each tutor group's first test are shown below. Year 10 are split across two days.** Please make sure that your child arrives at school on time. They should join the socially distanced queue on the footpath next to the Will Mackeness Hall. Staff will then direct them into our testing room and guide them through the process. They will be waiting outside so will need suitable warm clothing.

#### **Tutor Group specific testing dates and times (first test only shown)**

Tutor group	Date	Arrival Time
11PHA	Thursday 4 <sup>th</sup> March	09:00
11MOS	Thursday 4 <sup>th</sup> March	09:30
11SHH	Thursday 4 <sup>th</sup> March	10:00
11JRO	Thursday 4 <sup>th</sup> March	10:30
11RWH	Thursday 4 <sup>th</sup> March	11:00
11PDY	Thursday 4 <sup>th</sup> March	11:30
10SRI	Thursday 4 <sup>th</sup> March	12:00
10PGO	Thursday 4 <sup>th</sup> March	12:30
10SSA	Friday 5 <sup>th</sup> March	08:30
10EFO	Friday 5 <sup>th</sup> March	09:00
10JGR	Friday 5 <sup>th</sup> March	09:30
10SSH	Friday 5 <sup>th</sup> March	10:00
7AMO	Friday 5 <sup>th</sup> March	10:30
7MMA	Friday 5 <sup>th</sup> March	11:00
7APA	Friday 5 <sup>th</sup> March	11:30
7REM	Friday 5 <sup>th</sup> March	12:00
7EST	Friday 5 <sup>th</sup> March	12:30

Tutor group	Date	Arrival Time
7MMU	Friday 5 <sup>th</sup> March	13:30
7CNE	Friday 5 <sup>th</sup> March	14:00
9PCO	Mon 8 <sup>th</sup> March	08:30
9PJA	Mon 8 <sup>th</sup> March	09:00
9JAR	Mon 8 <sup>th</sup> March	09:30
9IBU	Mon 8 <sup>th</sup> March	10:00
9ACA	Mon 8 <sup>th</sup> March	10:30
9AGR	Mon 8 <sup>th</sup> March	11:30
9JCL	Mon 8 <sup>th</sup> March	12:00
8MKE	Tues 9 <sup>th</sup> March	08:30
8SGU	Tues 9 <sup>th</sup> March	09:00
8CRU	Tues 9 <sup>th</sup> March	09:30
8MYO	Tues 9 <sup>th</sup> March	10:00
8KCH	Tues 9 <sup>th</sup> March	10:30
8NSM	Tues 9 <sup>th</sup> March	11:30
8ECH	Tues 9 <sup>th</sup> March	12:00
2 <sup>nd</sup> Test	Tues 9 <sup>th</sup> March	On-going

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## Things to do now

1. Visit the web page <http://weyvalley-academy.co.uk/parents/covid19-information-2021/>
2. Check your child's first Lateral Flow Test date and Time
3. Check they know their Year Bubble and Location including route into school
4. Ensure they have credit on their account unless you provide a packed lunch
5. All pupils will need water bottles as the fountains are switched off.
6. Do not send your child to school if they are ill but get a Covid test ASAP
7. Remind your children that MOBILE PHONES must not be seen in school
8. Check they have the correct equipment – pens, pencils, calculator etc
9. Correct uniform must be worn – this includes appropriate hair colour, no piercings etc.
10. Behaviour – normal rules will apply with some additional Covid related updates please read the Covid19 behaviour updates on our website
11. Avoid using public transport if possible and do not car share
12. Remind your child that they must not gather in groups outside of the academy
13. Remember all the Covid Lockdown rules still apply outside of school.

## GCSE and BTEC exams

A separate letter has been sent to Year 11 parents explaining the process for this summer's examination assessments.

## Reducing the Spread of the Virus

To minimise contact with individuals who are unwell pupils must not come to school if they have one or more of these symptoms identified by the NHS or if they ***test positive using the Lateral Flow Test kits.***

- high temperature – guidance says 37.8c or above
- new, continuous cough – a lot for more than an hour; 3 or more episodes in 24 hrs
- loss or change to your sense of smell or taste

**They should self-isolate and get tested asap.**

## Good hand and respiratory hygiene

Coronavirus (COVID-19) is a virus that can be killed by washing hands for 20 seconds with soap and water or using hand sanitiser. The academy has installed hand washing or sanitising points throughout the building and will expect pupils to clean their hands on a regular basis. I will also expect all pupils to follow the "Catch it, Bin it, Kill it" approach to respiratory hygiene. I have made tissues available in each Bubble but it would help the academy if you could also provide your child with tissues for this purpose. Please do not use cloth handkerchiefs.

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## Face Masks

The latest guidance issued to schools by the Department for Education on February 23rd is that staff and pupils must wear face masks in school when social distancing cannot be achieved. **This means that from March 8<sup>th</sup> face masks will be compulsory in all indoor areas** for the remainder of this term. This position will be reviewed in line with national guidance over the Easter break. It is one part of the range of measures we have in place to keep our school community safe and the school open.

I recommend that the most comfortable face coverings will be the cloth reusable ones, they also have less impact on the environment than the disposable surgical style masks that are plastic based.

Pupils will require more than one mask each day as the Health and Safety guidance stipulates that if removed and touched with hands that have not been cleaned they should be replaced with a clean mask.

## Risk Assessment Measures

In accordance with the updated guidance, we have reviewed our Risk Assessment. The central measures involve:

- Offering asymptomatic testing to pupils and staff
- Engaging with NHS Test & Trace
- Enhanced cleaning arrangements
- Social distancing wherever possible
- Enhanced hand hygiene
- The use of face masks as outlined above
- Staggered break / lunch times
- The use of Zones / Bubbles for different year groups
- The use of dedicated external spaces for different year groups
- Avoiding shared materials wherever possible
- Ensuring use of shared spaces is minimised (e.g. pupils can wear PE kit to avoid the need to change)
- Sharing regular advice and updates with pupils and staff

The latest copies of our Academy Risk Assessment and the Mass Testing Risk Assessment are available on our website.

## Zones and Year Bubbles

Please visit our web page for more details about Zones, Bubbles and Drop off points routes into school, these remain unchanged:

<http://weyvalley-academy.co.uk/parents/covid19-information-2021/>

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Pupils will continue to be taught in their year group bubbles. I will ensure my staff do all they can to encourage pupils to maintain high levels of hygiene, and to respect social distancing between pupils of different Bubbles. The Zone and Bubble details are on the website and remain the same as during the Autumn Term.

For everyone's safety it is important that the pupils avoid mixing with children from other schools or other year groups when outside of school. You as parents and carers have an important role to play in this. The work done in school is so easily undermined if students do not follow the rules when outside of school.

Please encourage your children to act responsibly as it is their older more vulnerable relatives (and teachers!) who will be at most risk, as well as their own educational opportunities should infection rates rise again and a fourth local lockdown.

### **Canteen arrangements**

The canteen arrangements are as before the most recent lockdown. Each Year Bubble will have their own dedicated time to access the canteen to purchase food.

Pupils are welcome to bring in packed lunches as normal. Please make sure that all pupils have a drink of water with them. Fizzy and sugary drinks are not permitted on site.

Please be aware that the account cash top up machines will not be used at this time. This means that your child's account must be topped up using the online method. If you need support, please contact reception by telephone or email.

### **Attendance**

The government have told schools that school attendance will be mandatory for all pupils from 8<sup>th</sup> March. The usual rules on school attendance apply, including:

- Parents' duty to secure their child's regular attendance at school (where the child is a registered pupil at school and they are of compulsory school age)
- The ability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices in line with local authorities' codes of conduct

If you need support regarding your child's attendance, please do not hesitate to contact Mr Lydford, Vice Principal at [lydfordp@weyvalley-academy.co.uk](mailto:lydfordp@weyvalley-academy.co.uk). As our inclusion leader, Mr Lydford will work with you and your child to support them re-engage with school at this time.

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## **Learning Recovery**

This will be the language we adopt to use to support the forthcoming phase. It is inherently more positive than "Covid Catch Up" which stresses the gaps that exist, rather than the active educational processes by which they can be closed.

Please try to reassure your child that they will be able to learn and engage positively with their education once again. We will do all we can to support your children.

It goes without saying that the past few weeks and months have proved challenging for all of us but I draw inspiration from the resilience, flexibility and potential of each of our pupils and am confident that together we can undertake some really fantastic work as we return to school.

## **Support for pupils & families**

I realise that some pupils have struggled with their mental health during lockdown. If you feel that your child needs support in this regard, please do not hesitate to contact Mr Lydford VP, Mrs Field AVP and SENCO or their Head of Year. We will then work with you and your child to understand the support they need at this time.

## **Finally...**

As a school we are doing all we can to stay fully open and keep everyone safe and free from Covid. I need everyone's support to achieve this. I am requiring all pupils to wear a mask indoors, where social distancing is not possible, unless it is absolutely impossible for them to do this. The quick and simple Lateral Flow Testing that we need all children and staff to do, will hopefully catch cases that might otherwise go undetected.

I do not want to have to send children home again because of someone being in school and infecting others or worse still, if teachers have to isolate after teaching a student with asymptomatic Covid as that could result in a total school closure.

Thank you for reading this letter and supporting the school's efforts to keep your children and the community safe. It will undoubtedly be a busy and slightly unusual few weeks, however, I am very pleased that we will all be back in the classroom from Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> March.

I look forward to seeing your child at school soon.

Yours faithfully



Rob Russell  
Principal

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