



**Mr G Panayiotou – Headteacher**  
**Mr John McNichol – Chair of Governors**

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Our Ref: GP/NF

1st March 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

We hope that this letter finds you well. We wanted to write with some additional information regarding the updates we have received from the Department for Education over this last week.

### **Year 11 and 13 Exams**

Ofqual announced this week that exam grades will be based on teacher assessment. We very much feel that this is the best option at this time as pupils have suffered varying degrees of disruption. Teacher assessment will allow pupils to be judged on the work that they have completed.

We are waiting for further guidance from exam boards about the evidence that teachers will need to provide to support their assessment of a pupils' outcomes. We do know that there will be a rigorous moderation process to ensure that grades are awarded in a fair and consistent way. Our priority for Year 11 and 13 is to start face to face learning from the 8<sup>th</sup> March and support all pupils to settle back into school routines. We will share plans with parents and pupils later this term.

### **INSET Day – Friday 5<sup>th</sup> March**

To support with the preparations for the full opening of the academy, the INSET day that was postponed in January will now take place on **Friday 5<sup>th</sup> March**. The academy will be closed to all pupils other than those undertaking lateral flow testing. Teachers will continue to deliver live and pre-recorded lessons until Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> March, there will be no live or pre-recorded lessons on Friday. It is important that all pupils continue to access lessons and submit any necessary work to their teacher until this point.

### **Full Opening of the Academy**

Thank you to all parents who have completed the lateral flow test consent form. The rapid response by parents and carers has allowed us to plan for the return of all pupils to the academy. The government announced this week that schools are able to start testing pupils prior to the 8<sup>th</sup> March return date. As a result, we will be testing all pupils (who have asked to be tested) for the first time prior to the academy opening. This means that the academy will be able to open to all pupils in all years on **Monday 8<sup>th</sup> March 2021** for face to face teaching.

An additional letter has been sent to those parents who have consented for their child to take part in lateral flow testing which outlines how and when this will take place. Due to the logistics of preparing for testing, we are unable to accept further requests at this time.

### **Uniform**

When pupils return on the 8<sup>th</sup> March, normal school uniform rules will apply. We know that other than supermarkets, uniform shops are closed. If you would like some support with your child's uniform, please contact Mrs Salmon or Mr King who will arrange a time for you to come in and collect uniform prior to school reopening.

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## Face Coverings

As always, the safety and welfare of all pupils and staff at the academy remains our priority. We will be continuing to implement our enhanced hygiene measures and routines to ensure that the site is safe and any potential transmission is reduced. As part of these measures, the Department for Education have issued guidance that recommends that pupils wear face coverings in lessons as well as on corridors and in communal areas. This is a temporary measure which will be reviewed at Easter. Due to the length of time that pupils will be wearing a mask, it is suggested in the guidance that it would be beneficial for pupils to bring an additional mask to change during the day. We will provide all pupils with a sealed bag and a disposable mask upon their return. As with last year, all face coverings must be plain white, black or blue. Additional disposable masks will be available to buy from student support for 20p.

If your child is exempt from wearing face coverings, our blue badge system will operate. For those who already have a blue badge, they can continue to wear this upon their return (spares will be available from student support). If you think your child is now exempt, please write a note in their planner to request a blue badge. The reasons for exemption are outlined below:

- *people who cannot put on, wear or remove a face covering because of a physical or mental illness or impairment, or disability*
- *where putting on, wearing or removing a face covering will cause you **severe distress***
- *if you are speaking to or providing assistance to someone who relies on lip reading, clear sound or facial expressions to communicate*
- *to avoid harm or injury, or the risk of harm or injury, to yourself or others – including if it would negatively impact on your ability to exercise or participate in a strenuous activity.*

## The Academy Day

Other than wearing face coverings in lessons, the updated guidance from the Department for Education remains largely the same. As a result, our academy day structure will run as it did before Christmas. To ensure that pupils have access to the full curriculum, we will operate in year group size bubbles. The academy will open as normal from 8.45am. We ask that pupils do not arrive before 8.40am. Those who do arrive early, must go to their year group waiting area. Pupils must follow social distancing and hygiene guidance when travelling to and from the academy. This includes wearing face coverings on public transport and avoiding car sharing with people from different households.

Throughout the day, pupils will attend their normal timetabled lessons. To limit contact between year groups, pupils will have staggered breaks and lunches with their year group. The one-way system will remain in place across the academy with pupils released at staggered times at the end of lessons and at the end of the academy day in order to limit contact between groups.

Enhanced cleaning of the site and regular hand cleaning will remain a priority. Pupils will be asked to hand sanitise as they arrive in school and as they arrive/leave each lesson. Lesson by lesson cleaning of shared equipment will be in place across all subject areas. To avoid the sharing of equipment, we do ask that pupils arrive fully equipped with all that the items they need for the day.

Prior to Christmas, there were no positive cases reported in school for seven weeks. Part of the reason for this was the proactive support that parents provided by following national guidance to limit the spread of coronavirus. It is important that we all continue to be vigilant. A copy of the full, updated risk assessment will be published on our website on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> March.



Healthy Schools



To limit the spread of coronavirus, it is important that:

- You keep your child at home if they develop symptoms of coronavirus i.e. they are unwell with a new, continuous cough, a high temperature or have a loss or change in their normal sense of taste or smell.
- If your child develops symptoms, you book a coronavirus test immediately.
- If your child tests positive, they must self-isolate for 10 days from the first day of the onset of their symptoms. If they still have a temperature after 10 days, they should self-isolate until their temperature returns to normal.
- You inform the academy immediately if your child tests positive for coronavirus.
- Other members of the household must also self-isolate for 10 days.
- You must keep your child at home if they have been in close contact with someone who tests positive for coronavirus.
- Encourage your son/daughter to complete any on-line work set by staff for those self-isolating (providing they are not unwell).
- You keep your child at home for 10 days if another member of your household develops symptoms of coronavirus or tests positive for coronavirus.

### Children who are shielding or self-isolating

The government guidance is clear that the majority of pupils should be safe to return to school on the 8<sup>th</sup> March. However, if your child has been given clinical advice to continue to shield or self-isolate, please contact the academy and speak to their Year Leader.

### Well-being

We recognise that this has been a difficult time for some pupils. The large majority of pupils will be supported by the structure and routine of attending school but there are some who will need further support. Upon their return, we will take time to talk to pupils about their experience and make sure that those who need it have access to additional support. For parents who are seeking support materials prior to the return to school, there is the Young Minds parent support page on their website. Parents can follow the link to the site and answer six simple questions about their child and the site will recommend tips and activities that you can complete with your child. [Supporting Parents Helpfinder \(youngminds.org.uk\)](https://www.youngminds.org.uk)

### Extra-curricular activities

We are in the process of re-establishing our extra-curricular activities. The DfE have asked us to request that parents limit the number of out of school clubs that their child attends to one (in addition to any school clubs).

We recognise that for some families, your child returning to school is a daunting prospect. Please be assured that we have followed the government guidance to ensure the health, safety and well-being of all pupils and staff.

We are very much looking forward to welcoming back all pupils next week.

Yours faithfully



Mr G Panayiotou  
Headteacher

Yours faithfully



Mrs D Cook  
Associate Headteacher

