

1 March 2021

Dear parent/carer

Re: Plans for full reopening from 8 March 2021

I hope you and your family are well. Thank you for your continued support and understanding as we collectively respond to the challenges posed by COVID-19.

As detailed in my letter last week, the Prime Minister announced that schools will re-open fully, for all students, from Monday 8 March 2021, with testing in place for students. The Government has given secondary schools discretion as to how phase the return to school over that week, to accommodate our plans for testing. I am writing to you now to clarify our arrangements.

We are looking forward very much to having all students back at the Academy and want to assure you that – as has been the case throughout the coronavirus crisis – we will ensure the Academy is as safe as it possibly can be. Your child's health, and the health of all our students and staff, is our priority.

Arrangements for our phased return

We will offer three tests to all students, on-site, as they return over the period of the first two weeks. Testing is not compulsory but is strongly encouraged.

I will send a further letter outlining the arrangements for the testing and for you and/or your child to give consent to taking part in the testing scheme. Please read this and return the relevant consent to us as described ahead of 8 March 2021.

We will be inviting students to return as follows:

- Years 11, 12 and 13 will return to the Academy at 8.40am on Monday 8 March 2021
- Years 7 and 10 at 8.40am on Tuesday 9 March 2021 at 8.40am
- Years 8 and 9 at 8.40am on Wednesday 10 March 2021 8.40am

On the first day of their return, students will take a test and complete a range of 'Reconnection Activities', in tutor groups, to support their transition back to on-site learning.

Until they return to the Academy, students should continue to access Remote Learning, where teachers will set assignments, on Microsoft Teams, for each period. This will not be Live Lessons. Our Key Worker and Vulnerable Provision will also continue, on Monday 8 and Tuesday 9 March, until all students return to the Academy on until Wednesday 10 March 2021.

School transport services will operate as normal from Monday 8 March 2021. Students, who are travelling by school or public transport must follow all social distancing guidelines and are reminded that wearing a mask is compulsory.

On return to the Academy students will follow the operational routines and protective measures which were in place in the Autumn Term. We will continue to follow the government's public health guidance very closely, ensuring social distancing and 'fixed bubbling', wherever possible, keeping the Academy well ventilated and encouraging excellent hand and respiratory hygiene.

We will also be arranging for additional deep cleaning of our site, on a regular basis, and doing everything we can to maintain a safe environment for everyone following their return.

In addition to our existing protective measures, the government is now requiring staff and students to wear face coverings in all parts of the Academy wherever social distancing is not possible. This includes classrooms. Please ensure that your child is aware of this new expectation and that they bring a face covering with them every day. We appreciate your support in doing everything you can to help us enforce this important protective measure.

We are currently updating our risk assessments. These risk assessments will be available on the Academy's website on or before Friday 5 March 2021.

Public health guidance remains that if your child either develops symptoms of Covid-19 or tests positive, they must self-isolate and you should ensure that we are aware in order that we can assist with contact tracing.

Uniform

All students are expected to wear full Academy uniform on return. Details of our uniform expectations can be found on our website <https://www.dukeries.atrust.org.uk/parents/uniform/>. Please contact us on office@dukeries.atrust.org.uk, before we return to the Academy, if you require support in meeting our uniform expectations.

Equipment and Planners

We will be providing all students with basic equipment to remove the need to share resources when on the Academy site. This equipment will include: a pencil case, a pencil, 2 black pens and a green pen, a sharpener, an eraser, a ruler, a highlighter, and a glue stick. Students can, of course, bring their own equipment if they prefer. Planners will also be provided to any student who does not have one.

Attendance

From the first day of return, indicated above, attendance will be compulsory. Our attendance expectations are the same as they were prior to the pandemic, for all students, apart from those who have received a letter advising them to shield on medical grounds.

Home Testing

After the initial period of on-site testing, we will be issuing home testing kits for you to use, with your child, twice a week at home. I will provide details of how we will approach the administration of this once they have been confirmed.

Staff Training

To support staff training, in preparation for the return, we have rearranged Friday 5 March 2021 to be a Screen Free Afternoon. To ensure as many staff as possible can attend the training we ask that Key Worker and Vulnerable (KVV) students complete their Screen Free Afternoon at home. We will therefore close to KVV students from 12.30pm, after they have picked up lunch. If you wish your child to stay at the Academy for the afternoon on Friday 5 March please contact us on office@dukeries.atrust.org.uk to let us know. Provision will be in place for KVV students who travel to the Academy by bus. Buses will leave the Academy at the normal time. Please contact us if you would like to pick your child up instead of waiting for the bus. Thank you in advance for your support with this.

The Government's announcement indicates that we are tentatively returning to normal. However, I wanted to reiterate how alert we are to the continued risk of Covid-19. We will continue to adhere to stringent health and safety measures now, and when fully open. Your support in helping us be as safe as possible is much appreciated and will help ensure we stay open to all students, and keep your child, our staff, and you, safe.

I hope this letter is helpful, and reassuring, but please do contact us on office@dukeries.atrust.org.uk if you have any questions.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Ged Rae', written in a cursive style.

Mr Ged Rae
Principal