

31st December 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

I hope that you are well and that you and your family had an enjoyable Christmas, notwithstanding the COVID-19 restrictions that we are all living with.

As you know, we have all worked incredibly hard since the start of the pandemic in March to keep our school as safe as possible, and that work has continued over the Christmas holiday period following the latest Government updates and guidance.

My letter today includes important information relating to when your child will return to school at the start of this coming term, and relating to the COVID-19 testing process for staff and students.

Information relating to school re-opening in January 2021

The Government has now announced that secondary schools will re-open on a phased basis, as follows:

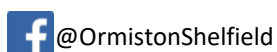
- If your child is classed as vulnerable or if you or your partner are a critical key worker, then your child can return to school on Monday 4th January. Please let the academy know before the academy reopens if your child will be attending from Monday 4th January by emailing keyworker@scacademy.co.uk with your child's name and year group. Students will need to wear full school uniform.
- If your child is taking exams this academic year (which includes all those in Years 10,11,12 and 13), then your child will return to school on Monday 11th January. Your child is expected to engage fully with their remote learning during the week of 4th January so that they keep up with their education. **There are examinations scheduled for January and the Government guidance currently states that schools should remain open for these, during the first two weeks of school this will affect students in year groups 10, 12 and 13. We will be in contact directly with students who are required to attend school for these exams with further details at the beginning of next week.**
- If your child is in Years 7, 8 or 9 then your child will return to school on Monday 18th January. Your child is expected to engage fully with their remote learning during the weeks of both 4th and 11th January so that they keep up with their education

Students will follow their normal timetabled lessons for the first week back (week A) and where applicable for the second week of the term (week B) and will be able to access their work through Teacher Dashboard. This is the same platform that was used during the Spring lockdown and is currently used for homework.

Students have been using Teacher Dashboard for some time now, including for accessing and submitting homework last term. The details of how to access Teacher Dashboard can be found on the home page of the school website. This includes a comprehensive guide and a walk-through video. Students should complete the work as per their existing timetable. It is expected that they should download, complete and submit the work back to their teacher during the times of their timetabled lessons. Thank you in advance for your support with this at home.

Broad Way, High Heath, Pelsall, Walsall. WS4 1BW | Principal: Stuart Turnbull

Telephone: 01922 685777 | Email: postbox@scacademy.co.uk | Website: www.scacademy.co.uk



Aspiration Positivity Responsibility Achievement

Your child's class teacher will be available to support with remote learning by answering questions about the work during the timetabled lesson times. Students should use the Question and Answer section of Teacher Dashboard if they are unsure of the work they need to complete.

For example, if the students have Maths on Monday Period 1, they should log on to Teacher Dashboard at 9:00am, download and complete the work then submit their work for their teacher to check. At 10:00am they should download the work that has been set for their Period 2 lesson and complete the same process. Staff can see on Teacher Dashboard whether your child is working through the lesson and will mark your child as 'present'. If your child does not access the lessons at the normal timetabled periods they will be marked as 'absent' and parents/carers will be notified of this absence through the academy's usual channels.

As before, a great deal of planning and risk assessment has gone into ensuring that our school continues to be as safe as for students and staff, in line with latest Government and Public Health England guidance.

We will continue to take decisions in the best interests of our students, working with you and keeping you informed every step of the way, while following Government rules and advice.

Information relating to NHS Test and Trace: COVID-19 testing for staff and pupils

You may have heard that testing for those without coronavirus symptoms is beginning across the country using COVID-19 tests known as 'lateral flow tests'.

Along with the other protective measures we are taking, these tests can help staff and students remain in school safely. Up to one third of people who have coronavirus experience no symptoms. By testing we will help to stop the virus spread and help to keep our school open as safely as possible.

The test will be supervised by trained staff. The lateral flow tests are quick and easy using a swab of your nose and throat. Results take around half an hour from testing and will be shared directly with staff and students. Where participants are under-16, parents or legal guardians will also be informed.

The Government has shared information with us from Oxford University and Public Health England, which have indicated the tests are as accurate in identifying a case as a 'PCR test' (99.68% specificity). The tests have lower sensitivity but are considered better at picking up cases when a person has higher viral load, hence the need to test frequently. Testing will be offered free of charge.

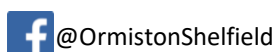
I will write to you again next week with details about how the tests will be administered as well as attaching a consent form for you to complete so that your child can be tested.

What if the test is positive?

Staff and/or students who test positive will be informed about their results individually. Where participants are under 16, parents or legal guardians will also be notified.

Broad Way, High Heath, Pelsall, Walsall. WS4 1BW | Principal: Stuart Turnbull

Telephone: 01922 685777 | Email: postbox@scacademy.co.uk | Website: www.scacademy.co.uk



Aspiration Positivity Responsibility Achievement

They will need to take a further 'PCR test' (similar to those done in local and regional testing sites) on the same day (or as soon as possible). They can go to www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test or can call 119 to book a follow-up test. If ordering a PCR test yourselves, we would recommend that you choose to visit a drive-through test site if possible, as it is faster than requesting a home test.

During the time while they wait for the PCR result (via text/email), the staff/student will need to self-isolate.

If the PCR test confirms a positive result they will have to self-isolate and follow the guidance from NHS Test and Trace.

What happens if the test is negative?

They will be able to stay in school and resume their activities as normal. A member of staff/student will only be told if they test positive on a lateral flow test, so if they do not hear they can assume it was negative. A small number of staff/students may need to repeat the test if the first test was invalid or void for some reason.

What if a close contact at school tests positive?

A close contact of someone in school who has tested positive for COVID-19 will be able to return to school if they agree to be tested once a day for seven days and the test is negative. If they do not want to take the test, they will need to self-isolate as per the national guidelines. This does not apply to household members or close contacts outside school who will still need to self-isolate. Further details will be provided at the time, but if you would prefer to self-isolate instead of doing daily testing, you can.

What if my child develops symptoms?

The testing programme at school is for people with no symptoms. If your child develops symptoms at any time (such as a high temperature; a new, continuous cough; or a loss or change to their sense of smell or taste) they must immediately self-isolate, and book a test by calling 119 or visiting <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>.

In the meantime, I would like to take this opportunity to wish you and your family a very happy New Year. Please do continue to take care and stay safe.

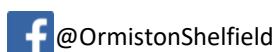
Yours sincerely,



Stuart Turnbull
Principal

Broad Way, High Heath, Pelsall, Walsall. WS4 1BW | Principal: Stuart Turnbull

Telephone: 01922 685777 | Email: postbox@scacademy.co.uk | Website: www.scacademy.co.uk



Aspiration Positivity Responsibility Achievement