



SHIRE OAK ACADEMY

TURNING POTENTIAL INTO EXCELLENCE



25th February 2021

Dear Parents/Carers,

Welcome back to the new half term. Thank you to those who completed our questionnaire on remote learning. On the whole the feedback was really positive and there was a recognition that home learning has been more effective during this lockdown period. Some issues have been raised which we are addressing this week and next.

We are delighted with the news that students will be returning to Shire Oak for face to face education. Though remote learning has been successful, nothing can replace the vibrancy of learning at school.

I wanted to write to you to set out our initial plans for reintroducing our students back to Shire Oak. The DfE has stated that school attendance will be mandatory for all students from Monday 8th March and that schools will have discretion on how to phase the return of students over that week to allow them to be tested on return. There are three key reasons why we are phasing the return:

1. To ensure a safe return for staff and students
2. To offer students lateral flow tests. Offering 1,500 students a test in one day is unworkable, with our current estimate showing at maximum capacity we can test 80 students an hour. The phased return makes the logistical challenge of mass testing more feasible.
3. Students have been out of physical school for some time, and we want to invest sufficient time to allow for a smooth transition for each year group.

After an initial programme of three tests in school, students will be provided with two rapid tests to use each week at home.

Testing and return: Our plan is to test all students one day before their return to the Academy and then on two occasions after that. Details of the additional tests will be shared with your child when they receive their first test. You will need to provide consent for your child to be tested at Shire Oak and you can do this by clicking this link: [Consent Form](#)

Please complete this form for each child (if you have more than one child at the Academy you will need to fill in one for each sibling). We will need to plan carefully for this testing and phased return, so this form needs to be completed by the deadline of Wednesday 3rd March 2021.

Year group	Date of first test	Date of return to Shire Oak Academy
Year 11 & 13	Friday 5th March 2021	Monday 8th March 2021
Year 10 & 12	Monday 8th March 2021	Tuesday 9th March 2021
Year 7	Tuesday 9th March 2021	Wednesday 10th March 2021
Year 8	Wednesday 10th March 2021	Thursday 11th March 2021
Year 9	Thursday 11th March 2021	Friday 12th March 2021

Please note, all vulnerable students and children of critical workers will continue to come into school. Instead of being in the Mercian block, they follow their normal timetable and rooms.

Control measures: Upon the return to Shire Oak, we will continue with our previous control measures:

- 1.1. Staggered start, break, lunch, end of day to limit contact between year groups
- 1.2. One way system around the Academy
- 1.3. Good ventilation in classrooms
- 1.4. Teacher 2m from students
- 1.5. Start and End of lesson protocol
- 1.6. Enhanced cleaning and Track and trace contacts of positive cases

Clinically vulnerable staff and students: The latest guidance is that Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV) staff and students should be supported to work remotely and should not attend school at present. We have previously contacted parents/carers of any CEV students and discussed their needs. Please contact us directly if you have concerns and you have not already spoken to a member of staff.

Face coverings: On their return, students will be expected to wear face coverings when moving around the site and in corridors as they had been before the lockdown. In addition, the DfE have stated that face coverings should be worn in classrooms. This will not apply in situations where wearing a face covering would impact on the ability to take part in exercise, for example in PE lessons. This means that students will continue to wear a clean face covering on their return to the Academy.

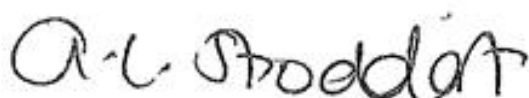
Uniform and appropriate clothing on cold days: To reflect the updated guidance, teachers will continue to ensure that their classrooms have good airflow and ventilation to reduce the risk of transmission. On cold days, students should be reminded to wear suitable layers of clothing (e.g. base layers under uniform). All students will be expected to attend in full uniform.

Conclusion: I know that some families will feel anxious about the return to school. Please be reassured that the safety of our students and staff is of paramount importance and our robust risk assessments are regularly updated and reviewed to reflect the latest guidance. We have responded immediately to any identified positive cases or any children or staff with symptoms to reduce the risk of transmission. We continue to use a robust procedure to identify contacts and move quickly to ensure that close contacts are sent home to isolate. To further support this approach, please DO NOT send your child into school if they have symptoms. If they have symptoms, they must stay at home and book a test. The symptoms of COVID-19 are:

- a high temperature – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)
- a new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)
- a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal

Your support and cooperation is so valued and we are looking forward to welcoming students back to school – where they belong.

Yours sincerely



Annabel Stoddart
Headteacher