

The Dorcan Academy

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Dear Parent/Carer

As you will now be aware, and we are delighted to inform you, schools will be able to re-open to all students **from** March 8 2021. However, in order to ensure a safe return we are required by the government to test students **for whom we have received consent** prior to their return using lateral flow tests. If students receive a negative test result they will be able to return to school full time starting the following day and will then be required to take two further tests in school over the next fortnight before being allowed to test at home twice weekly.

Due to the logistics and the time it takes to test a whole school cohort, the return to school will need to be phased. On Monday 8th March (and each day thereafter) school will be open as usual for the students who have been attending during lockdown. (We will be testing this group during the week prior to 8th March). On this day Year 10 and 11 students **who have given their consent** will be given a time to come into school to receive their first supervised test. Following this, they will return home and await the result. If you do not hear from us, you can assume your child's test is negative and return to school full time from the following day (Tuesday 9th March). If your child tests positive, we will inform you and they will then be required to immediately self-isolate and book a PCR at a registered centre to verify the result; if the result is still positive your child and close contacts will be required to self-isolate according to the current guidelines.

Years 7 and 8 will be invited into school for their test on Tuesday 9th March where the same procedure will apply, with their return starting on Wednesday 10th March; and finally, Year 9 will be invited in on Wednesday 10th March for a test and commence school on Thursday 11th March.

There will be not be any scheduled 'live' or remote lessons on the days that your child's testing is taking place.

Separate letters will be sent out to you indicating what time your child should arrive for their lateral flow test. Please support the process by ensuring that your child does not arrive more than 10 minutes early. It is vital that social distancing is maintained and that they are wearing a face mask. If you have not consented for your child to take the lateral flow tests, they will need to attend school on the first day of opening for their year group, as shown below.

Year Group	Date for testing for those that have consented (times to be sent out separately)	Date of Return for teaching on site at usual starting times
11	8 March 2021 – afternoon	9 March 2021
10	8 March 2021 – morning	9 March 2021
9	10 March 2021 – morning	11 March 2021
8	9 March 2021 - afternoon	10 March 2021
7	9 March 2021 – morning	10 March 2021

The government guidelines have also changed with regard to face coverings. For a limited time on return, students will be required to wear face masks **in lessons** as well as in communal areas. It is therefore vital that your child arrives wearing a mask and it would be a good idea for them to also have a spare. If students do not have a mask we will contact you before sending them home to collect one. If we are unable to contact you, your child will remain in isolation until we can. As before, if your child is exempt, they should wear their lanyard to identify this.

We are aware that some students will have grown several inches since they were last in school and it may not have been possible to purchase school uniform items during lockdown (as supermarkets tend not to sell it mid-year); also, it is evident that many families are struggling financially at the moment. If you do have items of uniform that are in good condition but that your child has grown out of, we would be really grateful to receive any donations that we can pass on to students who find themselves without the correct uniform.

Your child should attend in full uniform where possible and wear their PE kit on the days they have PE lessons. Replacement ties can be purchased from main reception; no other uniform items will be available for students to buy or loan from the academy. If your child is without items of the uniform, we will relax our expectations temporarily where needed (E.g., loss of items, items too small etc. and unable to replace) to prevent their non-attendance but they should do their best to wear a discreet alternative e.g., black trainers.

Please note that Year 7 clubs will not start again until Tuesday March 23rd due to the mass testing schedule. Also, from now on Year 11 will only be required to stay on Tuesdays and Thursdays (and in addition, Mondays) **if** subject teachers require them for intervention or catch up classes. The needs of students will be different and we would prefer to target smaller groups of students with particular curriculum gaps rather than providing one size fits all extra lessons. This will include stretching those students who have excelled in their learning during lockdown.

I believe this is the essential information you need to know right now and I will keep you informed of any further arrangements. We have missed the face-to-face interaction with our students and are very much looking forward to welcoming all our students back soon.

Thank you for your continued support during what has been some very difficult months.

Yours sincerely



Mrs Bareham
Headteache