

2nd March 2021

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A University of Kent Academies Trust School

Dear Parents and Carers

RE: Returning to the Academy – COVID-19 Update

We hope that you and your families are well and looking forward to returning to some sense of normality over the coming months. Thank you so much for your continued support in keeping your child on track with remote learning during this lockdown. We know that, for some students, this winter period has been a particularly challenging time and we intend to do everything we can to support the wellbeing of our students on their return to lessons on site. Well done to our students for maintaining such high levels of engagement during the last two months. Staff have also been working hard to facilitate these on-line lessons and students have responded very well indeed. We have received so much positive feedback from teachers about the efforts being made by students.

Firstly, we would like to thank you for your patience in waiting for us to share our plans with you to safely return all students to Brompton Academy. We can confirm that we are keen to get students back on to the Academy site at the earliest opportunity possible whilst also taking great care to ensure that the testing programme is conducted safely and effectively.

Planning is also in place for the same bubble arrangements and regular cleaning regimes to continue so we can keep students and staff safe at all times. We are still being particularly cautious as we recognise that we are not completely 'out of the woods yet', and that there is still some way to go before the COVID-19 situation is fully under control and so the safety of our students and staff remains at the core of all of our plans for a safe return to the Academy.

Lateral Flow Testing

The Academy will start testing students from Monday 8th March 2021 with the expectation that all year groups will have had their first test by Thursday the 11th March. During this week there will be a timetabled programme of testing for all students (consent is required for testing to happen) in all year groups across the Academy. Students in identified year groups will be tested on one day (and then be required to go home after their lateral test) returning to the Academy on the next day to begin their lessons on site. Individual letters with information of dates and times of the testing programme are being sent to each year group in a separate letter to this correspondence.

Please note that during the days when students are being tested lessons will continue to be available on-line for students to access prior to their return to the Academy.

In line with government directives all schools have been asked to offer students 3 Lateral

Flow Device (LFD) tests on-site, 3-5 days apart (minimum 3 days and maximum of 5 days). Tests 2 and 3 will therefore be conducted whilst students are on site during the school day. Again, this will happen on a rolling programme. Once students have been tested 3 times, they will then be provided with testing kits to enable them to test regularly at home. More information can be found by clicking on the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/mass-testing-for-secondary-pupils-as-all-schools-and-colleges-fully-reopenfrom8-march>

Eliot Centre students will be tested according to their year group but will remain on site after their test and and not be required to go home and return the next day.

As you can appreciate it is logistically challenging trying to schedule the testing of approximately 1400 students who attend Brompton Academy, and it is physically impossible to complete this process so that all students fully return to the Academy on Monday 8th March 2021. However, the arrangements we have made do include the testing of two year groups per day and the use of two venues for Lateral Testing per day, with all students back in their lessons by Friday 12th March 2021. Thus meeting the government deadline of secondary schools being fully reopened by Monday 15th March 2021.

Consent

We hope that for everyone's safety, our students will engage with the mass asymptomatic testing programme. For your child to participate in the testing programme, we require an online consent form that will need to be completed by **Wednesday 3rd March 2021**. Tests will not be administered without consent. Please note, students over 16 years who are able to provide informed consent - can complete this form themselves, having discussed participation with their parent or carer if under 18 years.

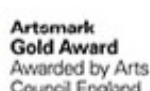
Testing is voluntary for all students and we can confirm that students will not be prevented from attending Brompton Academy if they **do not** consent to the testing programme.

A separate letter will be emailed to you very shortly with details of how to complete the online consent form, together with further supporting information and a useful short NHS video to watch to help your child prepare for the testing next week at the Academy.

Covid Protocols for the Academy

Please rest assured, all preventative measures which were implemented back in September 2020 will continue and students will be required to follow the same protocols. These are outlined below:

- Attend lessons in their year group bubbles
- Continue with social distancing protocols
- Separate entrances and exits for different year groups
- Separate break and lunch times for different year groups
- Increased cleaning regimes across the Academy



Masks

Students will be asked to wear masks when moving around the Academy building but are no longer required to wear masks during lessons as further information around the wearing of face masks has stated that this is no longer a mandatory requirement in lessons.

However, students can wear masks if they feel more comfortable in lessons as we want students to feel that they have the freedom to choose this option.

Students can wear their own choice of plain face masks (no motifs or slogans) or they are also welcome to wear the face masks which were previously provided by the Academy.

Staff Development Day

We will be cancelling the next Staff Development Day which was planned for the 12th March 2021. Please check our term dates on the BA website for any future Staff Development Days for the remainder of this academic year.

We are really looking forward to welcoming back all our students and returning to the Academy. We appreciate your patience and understanding during such difficult times and please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any further questions, via our Reception on 01634 852341 or email: reception@universityofkentacademiestrust.org.uk

Your faithfully

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