



Cumbria Academy for Autism  
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Cumbria  
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2<sup>nd</sup> January 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

Happy New Year

There is a lot of anxiety and worry at the moment about returning to School and in the news about the testing in School.

I sent out a letter before we broke up to warn you all about this. Over the Holiday there have been meetings and daily changes from the government. Please find attached the most recent communication from the County that summarises the current situation.

Our plan is to use the Monday 4th and Tuesday 5th in the first instance to test staff and logistical see our staffing levels to then safely open again when we can. I cant say for sure when this will be precisely and we will be in touch on Monday 4th when we know more. It will be as soon as it safely can be. Our Primary pupils will be back potentially from the Wednesday 6th onwards and our Secondary will also be invited back in too. We do not plan to have Secondary pupils off for the two weeks and working from home as this may be the case in mainstream Secondary Schools.

So much of this hinges on the tests arriving on time, the training and the tech required which is why I cannot be any clearer with more information at this time. To be as absolutely clear as I can be though, these tests are voluntary and all pupils and staff have to give consent. The idea is that it gives reassurance to everyone, but I can appreciate it may cause anxiety in you and your children. We will not force anyone to take a test and if you do not choose for your child to take a test that is absolutely fine. We will still be opening again regardless and using other measures to keep everyone safe, such as social distance, handwashing, staying away from school if displaying symptoms and being ill and all of the measures we had in place. This test is not a vaccine, it is a Lateral Flow Test and is basically like the home test kits you use but we develop the answer on site rather than send it away to a lab. This is why they are not as reliable and may result in false positive results which will require a further test off site, which is why I need to test staff first to know our staffing levels for the week. We cannot safely open the school if we do not have enough staff.

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Some of you have made appointments as offered to come on site to test your Child. If we have the tests and staff trained we will still carry this out as arranged, but we will only know for sure on Monday and so we will be in touch once we know more.

I know this is frustrating and worrying for everyone, but from Monday 4th we will have a much better idea logistically of what we can and cannot do. We will open again safely as soon as we can and we will be in touch when we are all back in work in 2021.

Take care

**Richard Aindow**

**Head Teacher**