



GARSTANG COMMUNITY ACADEMY

Bowgreave · Garstang · Lancashire · PR3 1YE · Tel: 01995 603226 · Email:
info@garstangcommunityacademy.com

5th March 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

As you will be aware, children will start to return to school on Monday (see summery below) and I wanted to hopefully address most of your questions and concerns:

General expectation:

- Children must only come to school (other than if expected in the on-site provision) on the days indicated below, and must not access site until 8.15am at the earliest.
- Children must be in full school uniform (or the regulation PE uniform on the relevant days – the PE department have communicated days separately) – if there are uniform issues, please let us know in advance by contacting Progress Leaders. We have arranged to have a number of items available to purchase on site to make replacement easier – we could arrange some degree of payment support for these items if requested.
- While we realise that the testing programme (see below) will be unsettling and a little disruptive, we do expect all children to make a big effort to engage straight away with their on-site learning once in school.
- Children who have not sufficiently engaged in their remote learning will be expected to catch up work through after school lessons from Monday 15/3 – any children who are on this potential list have already been told that it is a possibility depending on their engagement in the last 2 weeks of remote learning. Any students expected to attend the after school catch up lessons will be informed during next week.
- The Government have stated that in settings ‘where pupils and students in year 7 and above are educated, face coverings should be worn in classrooms’ other than where exemptions apply e.g. ‘where children cannot put on, wear or remove a face covering because of a physical impairment or disability, illness or mental health difficulties.’ To follow this guidance, it is our expectation that students wear a clean face mask in all indoor spaces unless their parents have had a conversation with their Progress Leader and it has been agreed that there is a reason for them not to do so – in which case, staff will be informed and students issued with a card. Any other children without a mask will be supplied with one, if necessary, and asked to wear it – so please help us to help you and your children by getting in touch with Progress Leaders if you feel there is a legitimate reason for your child to be in school without a mask for some or all the time.
- Children must wash their hands regularly, and sanitise when they move in and out of buildings and/or classrooms, must maintain social distance (2m) from adults at all times, and from other children as often as possible, avoid physical contact with other children as far as is reasonably possible, and stick to small friendship groupings as much as they can. It would be great if students could bring their own hand-sanitiser to make this process easier and their own school equipment so as little as possible is borrowed/shared.
- Children should leave site, or board their bus, immediately that their bubble has been released at our staggered end of the day and then maintain their social distancing and/or abide by the bus regulations (below) until they arrive home.



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Buses:

LCC have confirm that all LCC school bus services, and Stagecoach likewise for the 46x, will run as normal from Mon 8th March.

When on their bus to or from school, children should follow the following rules:

- Sanitise hands before and after the journey.
- When queuing up to board, keep 2m apart in the queue.
- Wear face coverings correctly at all times during the journey.
- Sit in allocated year group bubble zones on the bus and not leave or change seats at any point during the journey.
- When disembarking, allow others seated closer to the door to disembark first, and keep socially distant while waiting to disembark.

In instances where public transport is unavoidable, students must abide by all social distancing and bus user rules and conditions set out on the company (Stagecoach) website.

Testing:

Children whose parents consented to their child being tested (incidentally, this is almost 100% of parents) will be tested three times in the first two weeks. The first week of asymptomatic testing will begin on Monday 8th March following the return summary below.

On arrival at school on their allocated return date, children must stay socially distant from all other children and adults and report to the member of staff located in front of reception who will tell them which testing area to go. They must go directly to their test area and must follow the exact route communicated.

Students will not be able to go to lessons until they have a confirmed negative result from this first test. Including the post-test result wait, this could potentially mean a 2 hour wait for some; please encourage children to bring a book or some work that they can complete to keep them busy whilst waiting.

If your child cannot return to school on their allocated return date or if they are arriving late due to an appointment, it is really important that they report to reception on their arrival at school so that they can have their first test before going to any lessons.

From the week commencing 22nd March we will be moving to a home-testing approach. Please reassure your child that, to help prepare them for the home testing, they will be guided through the on-site testing process by one of our testing assistants who will reassure them and will be able to answer any questions they may have. More information on home testing will be sent home soon by Mrs Smith, but this is a link to the NHS video explaining the home testing kits which is worth a watch:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S9XR8RZxKNo&list=PLvaBZskxS7tzQYIVg7lwH5uxAD9UrSzGJ>

Please note that current guidance states that anyone who has tested positive for Covid in the last 90 days should still be included in the lateral flow testing.

It is important to remember that this asymptomatic testing programme does not replace current guidance for those with symptoms or those identified as a close contact of a positive case. Anyone with symptoms, whether they are involved in this programme or not, should book a free NHS test and follow government self-isolation guidance until the results of their test are known. Testing also does not replace basic preventative measures such as regular handwashing, wearing masks and social distancing.



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Remote Learning:

Today is 'Finish-off Friday', to allow children to 'box off' outstanding work, and to give staff capacity to get prepare for all that next week holds with the duality of remote and on-site leaning.

If children are wanting more to do, as well as the World Book Day 2021 challenge and the Online STEM careers event, Miss Royds has put together work for Years 7 to 9 on First Aid, Respectful Relationships, Online and Media and Internet Safety and for Years 10 and 11 a number of lessons on Mental Wellbeing. All of these can be accessed via links from the student bulletin.

For year groups not in school next week, Remote Learning will continue, with the same level of expectation in terms of engagement and work submission but there will be no live lessons.

Year 11

We continue to make sense of all the information which has come through from the DFE and Ofqual regarding Year 11 grades this summer and, while we have outlined something of a plan, we still await key information from exam boards. However, there are a number of key points I would like to share:

- The most important thing over the next few days and weeks is that Year 11 children come back to school and are not really worried – if they are worried, ask them to talk to someone – for instance bubble tutors, Mr Millatt, Mrs Rawcliffe, Mrs Robinson, me! We're all really happy to talk things through and try to help them.
- We fervently believe that really good teaching and learning must take precedence over the coming weeks to make sure that our children are well educated and well prepared for the next stage in their careers.
- We must not get too hung up on assessing – our assessment processes in school are really good and we therefore already, in most cases, have loads of assessment data to use. Bombarding children with assessments will not help this process and will certainly not help the children's wellbeing. We must strike the right balance here.
- That said, we will stick to our usual assessment schedule for this half term and next, which means that there will almost certainly, in the majority of GCSE subjects, be a chunky assessment this half term, and two assessments next half term.
- One of next half term's assessments will be under full exam conditions in a three week window starting from Monday 19th April.

Return summary:

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri
11	Testing and in lessons	In lessons	In lessons	In lessons	In lessons
10	Not in school	Testing and in lessons	In lessons	In lessons	In lessons
9	Not in school	Not in school	Testing and in lessons	Not in school	Not in school
8	Not in school	Not in school	Not in school	Testing and in lessons	Not in school
7	Not in school	Not in school	Not in school	Not in school	Testing and in lessons



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I can't tell you how much everyone is looking forward to welcoming children back next week – every conversation I have had with staff throughout the week has been around exactly that – we miss them!

And finally, as we move into the next stage of this extraordinary journey, a few thoughts:

- As always, thank you to you guys – parents and carers - for your exceptional support both of your children and of us – I know it hasn't been easy, and I am not sure how you have got through it, but you have. So well done!
- A massive thank you to all the GCA staff – again, it hasn't been easy and every member of staff has been superb – both our fabulous teaching staff and our amazing non-teaching staff – supporting the continued running of the school, delivering and supporting children in the on-site provision, supporting children's remote education and wellbeing, and supporting families – I hope you agree that they are fantastic and deserve a huge vote of thanks.
- Moving forwards, we will continue first and foremost, to deliver fabulous education. We will look to support children who need a bit of extra support (educational and/or emotional) over the coming weeks and months, but I believe we, and our children, are in a great position compared to the majority of schools nationally because we have worked so well together as a team, and our children have engaged so well.
- Our children – I have said this before, but will say it again – our children have been truly incredible! The resilience and integrity and perseverance and determination they have shown is incredibly humbling - a massive well done to them. What they have done will stand them in good stead educationally but will also give them great strength in the future.

Have a great weekend – we are expecting next week to be something of a physical and emotional rollercoaster, so please bear with us and get in touch with if you want to talk anything through – we would much rather talk to you directly than have you feeling that you need to vent frustrations via social media which, I find, is rarely helpful for anyone.

Very best wishes, stay safe and thank you!!

Alasdair Ashcroft
Headteacher