



## **GARSTANG COMMUNITY ACADEMY**

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

25<sup>th</sup> February 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

As you almost certainly heard on Monday, the Prime Minister has announced the reopening of schools from Monday 8<sup>th</sup> March, although he didn't make it clear at that time that the week beginning 8<sup>th</sup> March would be a phased return to allow schools to begin their Asymptomatic Testing programme (see below for more information). On Wednesday, I emailed you to give early notice that the plan for this return week will, therefore, not bring all children back to school for the entire week. As you will see from the plan below, I have prioritised Year 11 and Year 10 students in classrooms during the return week, with all children receiving at least their first test in that week and everyone returning full time from Monday 15<sup>th</sup> March.

### Asymptomatic Testing

The Government's stated position is that 'rapid testing' using Lateral Flow Devices remains a 'vital part' of their plan to 'suppress this virus, in education and childcare settings and across society. This sort of testing means that asymptomatic people who might otherwise continue to attend educational settings are identified and self-isolate.'

There are a number of key elements to this:

#### In School Testing

- We must offer 3 tests, 3 to 5 days apart
- Testing is voluntary, although clearly recommended – please complete the consent process if you have not already done so.
- Children 'self-swab' under the guidance of our testing team and then receive their result after 30 minutes.
- Children who are tested can only return to face-to-face education following their first negative result.
- We have got quite used to doing these tests over recent weeks with our on-site provision children and staff so, although this is a significant 'scaling-up', we are confident that we can get children through this with as little discomfort and disquiet as possible.
- All children, whose parents have consented, will receive their first test in the week beginning 8<sup>th</sup> March, with children in Year 11 and Year 10 receiving their first 2 tests during that week (see plan below).
- Anyone testing positive will be required to be sent home and self-isolate in line with the existing stay-at-home guidance.



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### Home Testing

- Following the initial rapid testing of 3 tests, 3 to 5 days apart, children will be supplied with LFD test kits to self-swab and test themselves twice a week at home. The results of each test must then be reported to NHS Test and Trace as soon as the test is completed either online or by telephone as per the instructions in the home test kit. Parents will be expected to also share their result, whether void, positive or negative, with school to help with contact tracing. More information about home testing kits will follow when we have any.
- For home testing, children aged 12 to 16 should self-test and report with adult supervision. The adult may conduct the test if necessary. Children aged 11 should be tested by an adult.
- We will send home further help and guidance closer to the time, but will also talk children through the process as they are being tested on-site.
- Children with a positive LFD test result will need to self-isolate in line with the existing stay-at-home guidance. They will also need to arrange a lab-based polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test to confirm the result.

### Return To School Plan

With the complexities and constraints of the Asymptomatic Testing as described above, it is important to ensure we have enough physical space in school to allow for children waiting to be tested to be socially distant as well as those who have been tested and are waiting for their first test result before being able to commence face-to-face learning. As such, I'm sure you will understand that I am prioritising the return to classrooms for years 11 and 10. The current plan for the week beginning 8<sup>th</sup> March therefore is as follows:

#### Year 11

Monday 8/3/21 – all Year 11 students who will be tested return to school for their first Lateral Flow test – once students have had their first test, they will return to their classrooms and follow a normal timetable.

Students whose parents have declined to give consent should sign in at 12.30pm to follow their normal timetable for Periods 4 & 5.

Tuesday 9/3/21 onwards – all students in all timetabled lessons.

#### Year 10

Monday 8/3/21 – Only Y10 students who have been attending our on-site provision will be in school.

Tuesday 9/3/21 - all students who will be tested return to school for their first Lateral Flow test – once students have had their first test, they will return to their classrooms and follow a normal timetable.

Students whose parents have declined to give consent should sign in at 1.05pm to follow their normal timetable for Periods 4 & 5.

Wednesday 10/3/21 onwards – all students in all timetabled lessons.



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### Year 9

Monday 8/3/21, Tuesday 9/3/21, Thursday 11/3/21 and Friday 12/3/21 – Only Y9 students who have been attending our on-site provision will be in school.

Wednesday 10/3/21 - all students who will be tested come in to school for their first Lateral Flow test – once students have had their first test, they will go to their classrooms and follow a normal timetable for the remainder of that day.

Students whose parents have declined to give consent should sign in at 12.30pm to follow their normal timetable for Periods 4 & 5.

Monday 15/3/21 onwards – all students in all timetabled lessons.

### Year 8

Monday 8/3/21, Tuesday 9/3/21, Wednesday 10/3/21 and Friday 12/3/21 – Only Y8 students who have been attending our on-site provision will be in school.

Thursday 11/3/21 - all students who will be tested come in to school for their first Lateral Flow test – once students have had their first test, they will go to their classrooms and follow a normal timetable for the remainder of that day.

Students whose parents have declined to give consent should sign in at 13.05pm to follow their normal timetable for Periods 4 & 5.

Monday 15/3/21 onwards – all students in all timetabled lessons.

### Year 7

Monday 8/3/21, Tuesday 9/3/21, Wednesday 10/3/21 and Thursday 11/3/21 – Only Y7 students who have been attending our on-site provision will be in school.

Friday 12/3/21 - all students who will be tested come in to school for their first Lateral Flow test – once students have had their first test, they will go to their classrooms and follow a normal timetable for the remainder of that day.

Students whose parents have declined to give consent should sign in at 13.05pm to follow their normal timetable for Periods 4 & 5.

Monday 15/3/21 onwards – all students in all timetabled lessons.



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In 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

Please note children without a specific medical exemption will be expected to wear masks in all indoor areas including classrooms. If you believe your child to have a specific medical exemption, please contact their Progress Leader to make an appointment to discuss this prior to children returning. All other usual expectations will apply including full school uniform etc.

### Remote Learning

For the next week, our remote learning will remain as it has for the last two months but will then undergo a necessary change to accommodate phased return from 8<sup>th</sup> March with staff teaching some children in school during the week:

- Friday 5<sup>th</sup> March will be another Finish Off Friday.
- From Monday 8<sup>th</sup> March there will be no Live Lessons.

### Year 11 Exam Results

There was a very brief Department for Education press release this morning to tell us that 'Fairness and flexibility are at the heart of the Government's plans to ensure young people get to their next stage of education or training' and that 'Teachers will be able to draw on a range of evidence when determining grades, including the optional use of questions provided by exam boards, as well as mock exams, coursework, or other work completed as part of a pupil's course, such as essays or in-class tests. No algorithm will be used.' Unfortunately was no useful detail or guidance as to how this is to be carried out other than to say that 'To support teachers in making their judgements, exam boards will provide detailed guidance before the end of the spring term.'

What we do now know, is that grades will be submitted to the exam board by 18<sup>th</sup> June which is two weeks after the half term break. As information is unlikely to be arriving in school from exam boards much before Easter, and there will be inevitable administrative constraints prior to grades actually being submitted, it feels to me like we will have the majority of the half term straight after Easter to come to grading decisions.



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The final piece of useful information in the press release is that GCSE results day will be in the week of 9<sup>th</sup> August (so, presumably Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> August) to 'provide additional time for appeals to be completed' although there is no indication of what the appeals process will be or over what time period.

### Reporting and Progress Evenings

The 'remote' Year 11 Progress Evening went very well, and we will continue with this platform for the foreseeable future. It had been our intention to hold a year 10 Progress Evening before Easter, but feel with the return to school complexities, this will be more appropriate early in the Summer Term.

I am sure that, like me, you are looking forward to children being back at school – we have really missed them.

Very best wishes, and stay safe

Alasdair Ashcroft  
Headteacher