

Alcester Academy

Headteacher: Mrs Sarah Mellors



Director of Studies: Mrs Wendy Woodman
Director of Student Wellbeing: Miss Karen Buckthorp

February 2021

Dear Parents/Carers

I'm delighted to write to you today with details of the return to school planned for the week of 8th March 2021. We cannot wait to see the students back in school. In light of the lateral flow tests required within school, this will be a staggered return to school as follows:

Week of 1 st March	'Return Assemblies' on line to all students; protocols, safety., expectations Year 7 – Wednesday 3 rd March 8.45am Year 8, 9, 10 – Thursday 4 th March 8.45am Year 11 – Friday 5 th March 8.45am	
Friday 5 th March	School closed for all children of key workers or other categories Staff return to school for planning All work posted for students on Google Classroom streams	
Monday 8 th March	Y11 and Y10 return only Y7, 8, 9 remain at home	Students will be asked to lateral flow test on their first day in school and two further tests will be requested 3-5 days after each of these
Tuesday 9 th March	Y9 and Y8 return Y7, 10, 11 remain at home	
Wednesday 10 th March	Year 7 return Year 8, 9, 10, 11 remain at home	See further on in the letter for details of start times and entrances
Thursday 11 th March	All students return	Learning will continue via Google Classroom at home for those students in later during this week
Friday 12 th March	All students return	

The operation guidance for schools is published for your reference:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/963541/Schools_coronavirus_operational_guidance.pdf We have taken time to digest this guidance and plan for the safest return of our students at this time. Our risk assessment is posted on the school website for those interested to read this. Attendance to education within the school is mandatory.



Guidance and reminders

Sanitising and hand washing

The school will continue to supply enough sanitiser for students to regularly access this as required. Hand washing will continue to be advised and encouraged on a regular basis. We have continued to employ an on-site housekeeper to clean touch points regularly and toilets throughout the school day. The guidance suggests hand washing:

- Upon arrival to school
- When returning from break
- Before and After Eating
- 'Catch it, kill it, bin it' still applies at all times as a ruling.

Year Group Bubbles

The same entrances/exits and school day times apply as before Christmas:

	Entrance/Exit... (No change since September)	Key arrival/depart times (No change since September)
Year 7	Is the school drive adjacent to the caretakers bungalow Walking to school up Captains Hill and along Gerard Road	8.40am/3.15pm
Year 8	Is the side entrance at the back of the science block Walking along Throckmorton Road and along Gerard Road	8.50am/3.15pm
Year 9	Is the English door Walking up Captains Hill and along Gerard Road	9am/3.20pm
Year 10	Is the main student entrance underneath 'The Tower' Walking up Captains Hill and along Gerard Road	8.50am/3.25pm
Year 11	Is the English door Walking along Throckmorton Road and along Gerard Road	8.40am/3.25pm

We understand that if students arrive or leave on buses that these routes are not possible always but we urge you to speak with students about the safety aspects of adhering to these. Thank you. The minor stagger applied previously to entrance and exit times still apply. Year groups will continue to have break and lunch times in designated bubble areas with Y9 and 11 sharing their facilities. The same toilet facilities for each year group apply.

Face coverings

The new guidance stipulates, '**...we now also recommend, that face coverings should be worn in classrooms...**' and therefore we will expect all students now to supply their own face covering and wear it as they conduct themselves within the school building. Face coverings are not expected to be worn in outside areas. I feel particularly passionate about this in order that the staff feel as protected as possible during the return to school also. They will be wearing face coverings to teach also. This guidance is in place initially until Easter.

We do have two pregnant members of staff currently and I know that our students will be extra mindful of the safety of the whole school community right now.

Lateral Flow Testing via Lateral Flow Devices (LFD)

We are an Asymptomatic Testing Site (ATS) and we will be operating a KS3 and KS4 centre in order to facilitate the 'return to school' expectations of three tests. Students will be expected to test

themselves at school. These three tests will be staggered between 3 and 5 days and are subject to parent consent. Following this, parents will be issued with a home testing kit and on a trust basis, this must be completed on a regular timeline. Further details will follow. This process will ensure that we try to keep the school community as safe as possible. Staff will administer their own testing at home also.

In the event that a student has a positive test indication, we will inform you as soon as possible as parents and advise that you visit a PCR (**Polymerase chain reaction**) test centre for a full covid test in order to confirm this. School do hold a small stock of PCR tests but I believe that these are now very easy to book and in good supply at your local centre. <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>

Staff at school will deal with any positive cases as sensitively and discretely as possible. This will then also apply to those other students considered as 'close contacts'. As always, we ask that you refrain from using social media to make statements about the school situation. I intend to keep you as updated as is required.

Before students test, we will show them how to conduct a LFT. Can I advise that it is very useful if you also sit down at home and watch videos of 'how to...' do this together with the students. Two recommended links are here for you to use:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1_kekKWm6gAU2LqHYeTv_HSR0ysCd_Oxx/view?usp=sharing

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLvaBZskxS7tzQYIVg7lwH5uxAD9UrSzGJ>

We can support students through the process of lateral flow testing but cannot administer the tests for them I'm afraid.

The provisional testing schedule looks like this so far and will obviously cause some initial disruption to teaching in the first two weeks of our return to school:. A test takes just minutes to do but then 30 minutes to process results:

Week 1 W/C 8th March					
Date	08/03/21	09/03/21	10/03/21	11/03/21	12/03/21
Site 1 (Hall)	11	9	7	11	9
Site 2 (Gym)	10	8	No testing	10	8

Week 2 W/C 15th March					
Date	15/03/21	16/03/21	17/03/21	18/03/21	19/03/21
Site 1 (Hall)	7	10	8	7	No testing
Site 2 (Gym)	11	9	No testing	No testing	No testing

(Note, this may well be subject to change if required)

Parents in school

Sadly, we still can't welcome you in to school freely at present. Any visits to school MUST be pre-arranged please. 'Popping' in to reception should be avoided also please. If you are required to collect your child, please come to main reception, announce your intention, and then wait outside.

COVID Symptoms

It goes without saying that children should NOT be in school with any of the coronavirus symptoms. <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/symptoms/>. Equally, if your child is poorly during the school day, they must report this immediately to a member of staff. If we encounter multiple cases, we will seek advice from PHE and will most likely close the school so that we can deep clean. In this event, children will swiftly move to temporary remote learning from home for a very short while.

We will ask you to be contactable at all times 'just in case'. The guidance suggests that in any potential positive cases, students that are old enough are allowed to make their own way home as soon as possible if you are unavailable to collect them. This will ONLY be done in negotiation with you first as long as students do not need public transport to get home.

Positive COVID results outside of school

If your child is ill and off school followed by a positive test, we urge you to keep them off school and inform me as soon as possible so that we might trace any close contacts head@alcesteracademy.org.uk

Student absence from school

For students unable to be at school because of positive test results, or the need to self-isolate, instructions for accessing work will be posted on the COVID section of the website: <https://www.alcesteracademy.org.uk/life-at-alcester-academy/coronavirus--covid-19->

School uniform

All students will be expected to return in full school uniform. The plain sweatshirts allowed in the colder winter months will no longer be allowed and the school jumper or an under layer should be worn for warmth as required, or indeed a coat at break times.

Entrance to the canteen remains via an outside route for all students and therefore an umbrella or similar is still advisable for wet weather.

On PE days, students in Y7-10 must wear their correct PE kit. As the only adjustment, Year 11s are permitted to wear plain black leggings or joggers instead of academy bottoms in light of the few months left at school. We do not want parents going to unnecessary expense for new Y11 items of kit.

School will be well ventilated and if the temperatures plummet, we will review this in order that the students remain warm and comfortable enough to learn well.

The guidance confirms that it is not necessary to wash uniform each day in order to control the virus.

Buying food at school

As for before Christmas, all students will be able to access a limited food service at break time and lunch times on a 'grab and go' system. This worked very efficiently for everyone. Please ensure that students have their cards in order to pay with enough credit on these.

Student welfare and care

We are very aware that two major lockdowns will have had an adverse effect on many of our students. We intend to work with compassion and patience as students return to normal routines and re-establish connections with peers. If you have any worries as we return, I urge you to contact the appropriate staff member at school please.

If anything changes before we return to school, I will communicate with you all. In the interim, if you require any clarification, please make contact.

head@alcesteracademy.org.uk – general concerns

wendywoodman@alcesteracademy.org.uk – matters related to teaching, progress or assessment

karenbuckthorp@alcesteracademy.org.uk – welfare, care or safeguarding

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Mellors'.

Sarah Mellors
Headteacher