



Corby Business Academy

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Associate Principal: Simon Underwood

21st December 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

As Principal of Corby Business Academy, you will appreciate in that my immediate duty is always the safety and welfare of our students, staff and community.

As we plan for the DfE announced phased return to school in the first week in January 2021, and in line with the government's direction, that responsibility feels more poignant than ever. I am communicating to inform you of our current plans.

Phased return for the first week of term

As the situation currently stands, only the following groups of students should attend school from 5th January to 8th January 2021:

- All students in Year 11 and Year 13
- Any other students taking external examinations in January 2021
- Vulnerable children should attend – the definition of vulnerable children* is given in [this guidance](#)
- It is optional for the children of critical / key workers* to return - the definition of critical workers is given [here](#)

** The Academy has the list of critical / key worker and vulnerable students from the first national lockdown. However, after reading the guidance above or if you think your circumstances have changed, please contact us using the following email: enquiries@corbybusinessacademy.org*

All other students will be accessing remote learning during our first week of Term 3. As a reminder, all remote learning access and expectations can be found on our website, via the link below:

<https://www.corbybusinessacademy.org/page/?title=Online%2FHome+Learning&pid=673>

COVID-19 rapid testing in schools

It is now clear that there are initially two main problems we face as a society and within education. The first is the predicted rise in infections over the Christmas period and the second is the changing epidemiology.

Although the rise in infections over the Christmas period was anticipated, the rapidly changing COVID-19 variant was not expected, and we do not yet know exactly how it is manifesting itself.

This means that if we can arrange for staff and secondary aged students to be tested using the quicker lateral flow device tests, this should be a substantial contribution to supporting the cessation of transmission chains, and to keeping education provision open.

The government has thankfully clarified over the weekend that schools are under no obligation to start mass testing on 4th January 2021, which would be extremely challenging to achieve and do well. However, the sooner schools can put arrangements in place, the stronger the national intervention to curb transmission of the virus, so it is important we support this aspect.

The Government has told us it is their intention to deliver testing kits to schools on January 4th 2021, but it would be foolhardy to assume everything will run smoothly. We are being prudent in taking the first part of that week to ensure everything is ready before beginning testing. Once we are certain we have all necessary resources, staff training, risk assessments and physical spaces organised, it is our intention to offer testing to students in Years 11 and 13 first. We will then encourage other students to participate on their return to school.

Parental consent for testing

Our legal advice is that we should receive written consent with a parental signature for any child under sixteen years of age to participate in testing. Arrangements for giving consent will be issued at the start of next term along with further information about the testing process itself to help you make an informed decision. To be clear, the testing is optional and all students / parents and carers choosing to participate are required to self-administer the swab test, unless they require assistance. Staff will be on hand to process the test once the swab is taken.

After the initial mass testing phase is over, all secondary school staff will be able to have routine testing once a week; students and staff will be able to do 'serial testing' if one of their contacts within school tests positive. This means having a test each day and remaining in school unless the test is positive, which removes the necessity for self-isolating as a precaution.

Thank you for your support and understanding as we plan to do all we can to keep all our students and staff safe, and to assist the national effort to control the virus.

Please look out for further communications from 4th January 2021. Of course, if there are any other major shifts in government policy over the Christmas period that mean we need to change our plans, I will write to you again.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Underwood', written in a cursive style.

Mr S. Underwood
Associate Principal