

East Birmingham Network Academy

Dear Parent/Carer,

1st March 2021

I hope you and your families are well. As you will know, the Prime Minister made a speech on Monday 22nd February regarding the 'roadmap' out of lockdown, which included the return of students to secondary schools from 8th March. We know that this will have been welcome news to many of you and we are really looking forward to welcoming everyone back into school. I have been delighted with our students' efforts and engagement with school during lockdown and I would like to reiterate my thanks to parents/carers for their fantastic ongoing support.

This letter explains what we have put in place to ensure all students can return to school safely and how we will resume their education. *The plan is very similar to what was put in place for what was a very successful return to school in September.*

Current guidance and information for parents/carers can be found [here](#)

It is clear that we cannot create a totally risk-free environment. However, the work we have completed makes us confident that we can minimise any risks from COVID-19 whilst providing a full educational experience for all students. A key part of our plans will ensure we can be agile in response to what could be a changing situation – for example in resuming online learning should there be a need to do so. We will always prioritise the health and safety of our students and staff.

In preparation for the return of students we have:

- ✓ Planned a thorough testing programme to ensure any positive asymptomatic COVID cases do not come into school
- ✓ Updated our current risk assessments and procedures to make sure anyone who is ill stays at home and our immediate response to anyone with symptoms is secure and confident
- ✓ Reviewed our systems and facilities to ensure good hand and respiratory hygiene
- ✓ Reviewed our cleaning arrangements so that we can maintain enhanced hygiene across the school site
- ✓ Actively engaged with NHS Test and Trace so that we can continue to keep everyone as safe as possible
- ✓ Ensured the system of controls (as advised by Public Health England) is in place; staff and students will be regularly reminded of these:
 - Ensuring students/staff who have tested positive for COVID-19 do not attend school
 - Encouraging face coverings are used inside the building (including classrooms)
 - Ensure everyone is advised to clean their hands thoroughly and more often than usual
 - Ensure good respiratory hygiene for everyone by promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach
 - Maintain enhanced cleaning, including cleaning frequently touched surfaces often, using standard products such as detergents
 - Minimise contact across the school site and maintain social distancing wherever possible.
 - Keep occupied spaces well ventilated

As the approach taken in the Autumn was so successful in keeping the number of positive COVID cases low we have continued with these, including:

- ✓ Restricting mixing between year group bubbles - *students will remain in the same bubble teaching areas and social spaces*

- ✓ Ensuring that staff are able to maintain 2m distance from students and other staff by arranging our classrooms and modifying shared areas to accommodate this
- ✓ Updating risk assessments for practical subjects and adapting practice to ensure that students continue to have a broad and balanced experience whilst still keeping safe
- ✓ Staff and students should wear *appropriate* face masks inside the school buildings including classrooms *except*:
 - if they are outside (this is a change to previous guidance)
 - in PE lessons
 - when they are eating or drinking
 - if students are exempt:
 - i. if they “cannot put on, wear or remove a face covering because of a physical impairment or disability, illness or mental health difficulties
 - ii. if they need to speak to or provide help to someone who relies on lip reading, clearsound or facial expression to communicate” (from DfE Operational Guidance)

When will my child return to school?

- The school will be **open on Monday 8th March 2021 for Asymptomatic Lateral Flow Testing (LFT) only**. Where parental consent has been given, students will attend school at an allocated time to undergo LFT testing for COVID-19. The time of each child’s test will be confirmed by the end of this week
- Following a first negative Lateral Flow Test (LFT) in school, students should return on the following dates in March:
 - Year 11 - Tuesday 9th March
 - Year 9 & 10 - Wednesday 10th March

If parents/carers have not given consent for their child to have an LFT, their child should still return to school on these dates. However, it is *strongly advised* that students do take the test for their own and everyone else’s safety.

The phased return to school will help us ensure that students and staff are tested and prevent any potential asymptomatic positive COVID cases from coming into school.

- Remote education/ online lesson will be provided on Monday 8th March and work will be set for Year 9 and 10 students to complete on Tuesday 9th March.

Testing of staff and students for COVID-19 at school (LFT)

For a safe return to school, students and staff will be tested using Lateral Flow Tests. Students will take 3 tests in school with 3-5 day intervals in between. The purpose of the tests is to find out if anyone in school is COVID positive but asymptomatic, as well as to show students how to do the tests when home testing begins after their 3rd test in school. The tests are not mandatory, but it is strongly advised that students are allowed to have these tests in school to keep themselves and others as safe as possible.

If you consent to your child being tested, please complete the consent form attached to this letter and return asap, if possible by Friday 5th March 2021. If you cannot return it by this date then you must inform the school immediately and we will arrange a time for your child to be tested on Monday 8th March 2021. If they arrive for their test but they do not have consent form they cannot be tested. An electronic copy of this form can be found on our website at the bottom of the covid-19 section.

The form can be returned either in person or via email to enquiry@ebnfs2.org . Scanned copies are acceptable.

Further information about our testing programme will be communicated to parents/carers in a separate letter and will require students to attend during set appointments on Monday 8th March to ensure safe procedures can be adhered to whilst we are still in lockdown. To keep everybody safe, please ensure students keep to their test appointment times.

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GCSE Examinations

On Thursday last week, the Government shared their plans for grading of GCSE students in England. As soon as more details are available from the Department for Education about exactly how this will work, we will share our plans with you.

What we do know is that the grades will be set by teachers. This is a fantastic opportunity for Year 11 students to work as hard as they can, attend school every day, complete all work they are set and really show their teachers what they are capable of. We know how talented and hardworking our Year 11 students are.

Additional information

For a successful return to school, please can parents/carers support us by ensuring students are fully prepared and have the correct uniform and equipment for learning:

- Students must be in full uniform when they return to school including:
 - An appropriate face covering
 - Completely black footwear
 - Correct school uniform (EBN Jumper, Purple Polo Shirt, black school trousers/skirt that is an appropriate length)

We do understand that some students, parents and staff will be anxious about a full return to school. Our experience to date has shown that prioritising time for conversations and support is critical and so we will ensure availability of staff to talk to those who are particularly anxious.

I hope that this letter has provided you with sufficient information and sets out our next steps clearly. I look forward to welcoming your son/daughter back to school full time and thank you for your ongoing support; it is very much appreciated.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Matt Baldwin', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Mr Matthew Baldwin
Executive Head Teacher