



25th February 2021

Dear Parents & Carers,

Re: Lateral Flow Tests and Welcoming students back to the Academy

We are delighted to be welcoming students back to their Academy over the coming weeks and are keen to ensure that our full staff is available to focus on supporting children as they phase back to their Academy site.

Update to Lateral Flow Testing for children:

Firstly, thank you to the five hundred families who have already given permission for their child to take Lateral Flow Tests to keep everyone safe, save lives and protect the NHS.

The testing programme, as I am sure you will imagine is a mammoth effort for Academy staff, it will necessitate considerable staff time. Although we understand that offering Lateral Flow Tests is voluntary for schools, we absolutely believe that it is our duty to offer Lateral Flow Tests to every child, whose family has given permission, to support the national mission to combat the pandemic.

We also understand that our children will need us more than ever when they phase back to the Academy.

It is for this reason that we have decided to mobilise our testing programme next week, starting on **Monday 1st March 2021** rather than waiting until a start date of the **8th March 2021**. The Department of Education has confirmed that this early start is acceptable if schools are willing to undertake this. By starting the testing process earlier, we will also be able to phase the start back to the Academy sooner for children.

If you have not yet given permission for your child to undertake the three Lateral Flow Tests, we cannot undertake tests for your child.

Please complete the form at this link <https://bit.ly/383mpXh> to give permission and to join the five hundred Rivers Academy families who have already given this permission for their child.

By taking three lateral flow tests with us in advance of returning, not only will your child learn how to undertake the home tests twice weekly with you at home, but they will be helping to keep everyone safe, save lives and protect the NHS.

Please do remind your child to bring a face mask with them to the Academy, as you are aware these are now a requirement in all indoor spaces in our Academy.



Details of next week's testing programme which starts on **Monday 1st March 2021 will be shared on our website and via School Gateway tomorrow. Please check this carefully for your child's allocated time. If you have any questions please contact us as soon as possible at advice@rivers-aspirations.org**

Initial information regarding our phased return:

In a similar way that we cared for children as they returned to their Academy site after the first Lockdown period, we will lead one-to-one meetings for children with their Transition Mentor following the testing programme's completion.

This is likely to take place on **Tuesday 9th March 2021**, the date and personalised meeting times for your child will be confirmed in a subsequent letter. These meetings were invaluable in helping us understand each child's needs and will be an opportunity to remind them of key differences in our operations along with any new arrangements to keep each other safe. Appointment times, along with arrangements for the week beginning **Monday 8th March 2021** will follow in a separate letter.

We hope that you understand that it is not possible in the current climate to invite parents to accompany children to the meeting. If you are transporting your child to their meeting appointment, thank you in advance for waiting at a distance from the Academy gate, maintaining a safe physical distance to allow other children to enter and exit the site safely.

As ever, we wish you and your loved ones the very best. Should you have any questions, please do contact us at advice@rivers-aspirations.org

Yours sincerely

Andria Singlehurst
Principal