

9th February 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

As we approach the February half term holiday, I would like to provide you with an update from the Academy.

On Tuesday 5th January, we switched to our online remote provision whilst the Academy partially reopened to support vulnerable students and the children of critical workers. Each day we have had an average of 100 students working with us on site, accessing the same online, live lessons as all other students who have been working from home. The 'attendance' in online live lessons has been strong, with the vast majority of students accessing all of their lessons. Our teachers have reported generally good levels of engagement in live lessons, with a few exceptions. We have received lots of positive feedback from parents, carers and students about our online offer and I would like to thank everyone who has contacted us. Your positive words of support provide a welcome boost to all of our staff who are working tirelessly to continue to provide an effective learning experience under very difficult circumstances.

At the time of writing this letter, we await further announcements and guidance from the Government and Department for Education about plans for wider reopening after half term. We anticipate that the Prime Minister will make a key announcement on 22nd February and that this will be followed by more detailed guidance for wider reopening. The Prime Minister has also previously stated that schools will be given two weeks' notice prior to wider reopening in order to ensure we can plan effectively. As soon as we are in a position to provide you with more detailed information and our plans for wider re-opening, I will write to you again and share these details with you.

Our on-site Lateral Flow Asymptomatic Covid testing facility has now been up and running successfully for a number of weeks. All students returning to the academy have received two Covid tests, providing they have given consent to do so. Equally, all staff working on-site are tested twice each week. The latest information that we have states that students returning to secondary school will receive two Covid tests on their return, providing that we have received consent. This means that students accessing our Critical Worker / Vulnerable provision after half term will be tested again on their return. When we are given the go ahead to open more widely, we will need to co-ordinate the testing of all students. We are currently working on plans to ensure that this can be done efficiently and safely; this may involve the phased return of students over a number of days. As soon as we have more detailed information, I will share this with you. If you have not already provided consent for your child to be tested on his / her return and wish to do so, please respond to the text message that you will have received from the academy.

The academy will close on Friday 12th February at 3.15pm and all staff will be switching off their machines and taking a break from their screens; I encourage all of our students to do the same! Our online provision will start again on Monday 22nd February and the Academy will reopen for vulnerable students and the children of critical workers who have a confirmed place. Children who are eligible for Free School Meals will continue to receive their vouchers as normal during the half term holiday.

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Whilst the Academy is closed for the February half term holiday, we are still required to support the NHS Coronavirus Test and Trace service. Please follow the guidance below in the unfortunate event that your child tests positive for coronavirus during the half term break:

1. If your child tests positive for coronavirus **and has been in the Academy**, please Email Covid@winifredholtbyacademy.com, clearly stating:
 - Your child's full name
 - Your child's Year Group
 - The date on which their Coronavirus symptoms started
 - The date on which they took a test (**not** the date they received the results)
 - Names of any other students they may have had close contact with whilst travelling to and from school, break times and lunch time

***Please be aware that the academy's leadership team will not be on-call 24 hours and the email account will only be monitored once each day. Therefore, you may not receive an immediate response to your email.**

2. If your child tests positive for coronavirus and **has not been in the** academy, you should follow the advice of the NHS Test and Trace Team. Please do not contact the academy in this case.

Finally, I wish you all a safe and pleasant half term break. As always, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support and patience as we work through these extremely challenging times and I hope that I will be able to provide you with more positive news about wider reopening when we return.

Yours sincerely



Mr M Brown
Headteacher

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