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Date: Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2021

Dear parents/carers,

I trust you and your family are well and have enjoyed the holiday so far.

As you will no doubt be aware, the Education Secretary has announced additional changes to the reopening of schools next term – further delaying the planned start date for the majority of secondary school students while testing processes are put in place.

As such, the arrangements at Arena Academy are as follows:

- **Vulnerable children and children of critical workers** will be welcomed back on site as planned on **Tuesday 5 January**. If you are a critical worker and your child will be attending school can you please complete the Microsoft form using the following link: [Critical Worker Student Attendance \(office.com\)](#)
- **Students in year 11**, who are taking exams in the summer, should return to school on **Monday 11 January**, with remote learning in place from 5 January.
- **Students in years 7 to 10** should return to school on **Monday 18 January**, learning remotely from home until then.

### Remote Learning

I appreciate this news may cause you concern, but I would like to reassure you that your child's online education will be as close as possible to any normal day in school: students will register at the same time and have form time at 8:30am for Years 7/8 and 9:00am for Years 9/10/11. All lessons will be delivered live and teachers will be available throughout the lesson to respond to questions. An online learning timetable and guide on how to use Microsoft Teams were given to your child on the last day of the term before the holidays. You can also view the guide and online learning timetable by following this link: [\\*\\*\\*January 2021 Return\\*\\*\\* \(arena-birmingham.academy\)](#)

### Free School Meals

If your child is entitled to a free school meal, they may collect a packed lunch each day from reception between 12pm- 1pm from Tuesday 5th January to Friday 15th January.

### Access to equipment and technology

CORE Education Trust is committed to ensuring every student has access to a laptop or tablet device so that they can continue to receive a high quality of education. Should you need to borrow a device for this period please contact: [onlinesupport@arena-birmingham.academy](mailto:onlinesupport@arena-birmingham.academy), arrangements will be made for you to collect a laptop from school on Monday 4th January. If your child has any difficulties logging into Microsoft Teams or you have any general questions about online learning, please contact us at: [onlinesupport@arena-birmingham.academy](mailto:onlinesupport@arena-birmingham.academy)

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## Testing

As we have done since September, we will do everything we can to help keep staff and students safe. Following the Government guidance, my team and I have already begun to develop plans for testing and will be using the early days of term to fine-tune them. Here's what we know so far about the rapid testing programme recently announced by the Government:

- Students who are identified as a close contact of someone who's tested positive will be eligible
- All staff will be eligible
- While testing will be optional, we'll strongly encourage staff and students to take part
- We won't ask your child to participate in testing without their consent (or yours, as appropriate)
- Those students returning to school first will be offered testing first
- Students will be offered daily testing if they are identified as a close contact of a positive case in order to remove the need to isolate and to continue to benefit from face-to-face teaching.
- If someone tests **negative**, they'll still need to follow our social distancing and hygiene measures, which are listed on our website: [COVID-19 Advice \(arena-birmingham.academy\)](https://www.arena-birmingham.academy/COVID-19-Advice)
- If someone tests **positive**, we'll ask them to self-isolate in line with government guidance

The purpose of the delayed return is to prepare for whole Academy testing to help identify those who are carrying the virus without displaying symptoms, therefore reducing the risk of transmission. We will offer testing to as many staff and students as soon as possible. As Government guidance is changing on a regular basis, I will be able to share more details regarding the testing in the coming days, including a consent form and an instructional leaflet.

As widely publicised by the Government, testing can be completed by a wide range of people, and if you are able to support we would very much welcome you to make contact. We are able to provide appropriate training and support to any volunteers, if this is of interest please contact school and ask to speak to Martin Newman.

Students have responded very well to the COVID arrangements we have introduced this year - I am confident they will react maturely to this latest measure. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support and co-operation during these challenging times, and to wish you and your family a safe and happy New Year.

Kind regards



Headteacher