



Friday 26th February 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

I hope you and your families are well. As you are no doubt aware the Prime Minister has unveiled his plans for the route out of lockdown. This has rightly placed the return of students to face to face teaching in school at the heart of the process. We are looking forward to having students back in school.

COVID Testing

Upon return to NUASt each student will be offered three Lateral Flow COVID tests. This test detects the presence of Covid-19 by testing a swab that your child will take themselves from the back of their throat and nose. Results will be available in approximately 30 minutes. After an initial programme of three tests in school or college, students will be provided with two rapid tests to use each week at home. In line with the Department for Education advice, only students who have undertaken the three supervised tests in school will be given tests to take home.

We would strongly encourage all students to take part in the testing program. If you have not yet given consent for your child to undertake testing please do so by following the link www.nuast.org/consent

Attached to this letter is an information leaflet explaining how the test is undertaken. I hope this will provide reassurance to both yourself and your child.

Reopening of Schools

NUAST will reopen to students from Monday 8th March 2021. We are planning on a phased return of students to school the detail of which is shown below:

Friday 5th March – Year 12 and 13 will attend NUASt for COVID lateral flow testing. Students will be given a specific appointment time to attend. This will be sent to students early next week.

Monday 8th March – Years 11, 12 and 13 will return to normal timetable. Year 11 students will undertake COVID testing. All other year groups will remain at home and work will be set via Microsoft Teams.

Tuesday 9th March – Years 7, 10, 11, 12 and 13 will be in school. Year 7 and 10 students will undertake COVID testing. Years 8 and 9 will remain at home and work will be set via Microsoft Teams.

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Wednesday 10th March – all year groups will be in school. Years 8 and 9 will undertake COVID testing.

From **Thursday 11th March**, COVID testing will move to a repeat cycle three to five days apart in order to complete the required three tests before home testing kits are issued.

From **Thursday 4th March**, work set on Microsoft Teams will be self-taught resource based and live lessons will not be taught to allow teaching staff to plan for the return of students on Monday 8th March.

As previously, all students will work within designated bubbles within the school in order to maintain separation between year groups.

Key worker and vulnerable children

Key worker and vulnerable students who have been attending school during the period of lockdown should continue to attend school between now and the return date of their year group.

Uniform

All students are expected to be in full school uniform from the day they return. Please ensure that you have used the next week to check that items of clothing and shoes still fit and seek replacements prior to the return of school. Trainers will not be acceptable, formal shoes are required. Please refer to the school website for the full school uniform policy.

Attendance

We have been advised by the Department for Education that the usual rules and duties around school attendance are in place from Monday 8th March. **All students are expected to be in school**, attending full-time. No provision will be made for teaching via Microsoft Teams and/or at home. Students who do not attend school will be followed up using the school's attendance policy and Education Welfare Service referrals will be made where necessary.

Students who have been advised to shield should contact the Head of Year with proof of shielding and provision will be made for these students to continue their education.

Free School Meals vouchers

The vouchers that have been distributed to parents/carers for their children will cease from Monday 8th March as students will be able to access food provision in school.

School catering

Aspens will re-open the school catering provision for lunch service from Monday 8th March. Students will be able to purchase food and drinks. Please ensure that you have topped up your child's Parent Pay account so that they have adequate funds prior to returning. Cash cannot be accepted.

Breakfast club

This will be available daily from 7.40am (years 7, 8 and 9) and 8.10am (years 10 and 11) in the main hall. A link will be sent to parents via Parent Mail should you wish to book your child into breakfast club. Please note, bookings must be made in advance in order to allow the school to plan for this activity.

Face masks

The expectation from the Department for Education and ourselves is that all staff and students will wear face masks when in the school building unless they have a medical condition that prevents the wearing of masks. Those students who were previously issued with a 'NUAST mask exemption badge' must ensure that this is clearly positioned on the lapel of their blazer at all times.

We have previously received complaints from members of the public and transport companies about students not wearing face masks on trams and buses and I would ask that you speak to your child about the importance of wearing their mask whilst on public transport and show respect to members of the public or employees of transport companies when asked to put their mask on.

Examinations and awarding of grades

Yesterday we received the information around the process that will be used this year for the awarding of grades to students in years 11 and 13. We will review this information over the coming weeks and discuss this with teaching staff to ensure that we are accurately able to allocate grades based upon student performance during their courses. We will forward further detail of the process to be used when this is finalised in the next few weeks.

I would like to thank you for your continued help and support. Should you have any queries with regard to the above please contact your child's Head of Year or email enquiries@nuast.org

Yours sincerely



Robert White
Principal