



19 March 2021

Dear Parent/Carer,

I would like to start this letter by congratulating all of our amazing students on such a fantastic return to our Academy. It has been heart-warming to see them all working so hard and demonstrating resilience as they have settled back into the routines of Academy life.

As we step closer to the Easter break, I wanted to provide you with some updates but also to explain the on-going challenges we are likely to face as we continue to recover from the impact of Covid-19 and the recent Trust cyberattack.

Asymptomatic Testing

Over the past two weeks we have administered over 3000 lateral flow tests within our temporary testing centre and I am extremely proud of how staff and students have responded. It was inevitable, during our support of the national agenda to reduce the spread of infection, that we would identify asymptomatic carriers whilst undertaking mass testing. These identified cases, as we will all recognise, lead to 'close contact' situations and self-isolation periods.

Self-isolation

Having to ask students to self-isolate and return to remote learning is the very last thing any of us would want and it has been heart breaking delivering the news to some of our families this week. We will continue to commit to providing the best possible remote learning experiences for our students but ask families to recognise the current challenges teachers are facing. During our recent period of remote learning, teachers were recording lessons or delivering live lessons which were easy for students to access and engage with. Since teachers have now returned to their classrooms the capacity to replicate remote learning in this way is unrealistic so I would like to ask families for your patience and understanding.

Throughout next week, students will be issued with new passwords to access their email and Teams account. If your child has difficulty accessing their account during their self-isolation period then please contact their Pastoral Leader directly.

Remote Learning Provision

Furthermore, and as a result of the recent cyberattack, teachers continue to be without access to any of their historical planning and learning resources leaving them in a position where resources are having to be prepared for prior to the lesson being taught. This is having a significant impact on our ability to upload resources for remote learning in advance. I have asked teachers to upload their learning materials onto Teams in a lagged approach, ensuring learning resources are accessible to students the following day.

In addition, we will continue to email weblinks to online learning platforms, such as Oak National, which align specifically to the core curriculum (English, maths, science) students are accessing in school. As an additional mechanism to provide further learning materials, we will also provide a link to Oak National's daily 'schedule'. Here you will find a series of additional lessons and activities designed to enrich and expand learning further. You will find access to many other interesting areas within Oak National so if you wanted to delve into Latin or Computer Science you are more than welcome to support your child to do so.

Testing Kits

As explained in my previous letter, all students will be issued with their home testing kits before the end of the day on Monday 21st March.

Thank you for your support throughout this term and for those very supportive and kind messages we have received via email and through our Twitter page; it really does make a difference and keeps us all going during such difficult times.

As we go into the final week of term, on behalf of all the staff here at Newark Academy, I would like to wish you and your families a safe and enjoyable Easter. We will look forward to welcoming students back on Monday 12th April.

Yours sincerely,

Chris Fisher

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chris Fisher', with a stylized, cursive flourish.

Head of School

