

1st November 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

RE: COVID-19 Update from WMG Academy – Lockdown in England

You will be aware that on Saturday 31st October, the Prime Minister announced further lockdown restrictions in England. As we saw in March, the rate of coronavirus infections has rapidly increased since the beginning of Autumn and the measures announced are designed to slow this spread.

From Thursday 5th November until at least Wednesday 2nd December, everybody in England must stay at home and avoid all but essential travel; however, the Prime Minister made it clear in his statement and the subsequent guidance released from the Government that schools will remain open and children and young people will be able to leave their homes and travel for educational reasons.

With this in mind, we wanted to take this opportunity to confirm that WMG Academy will reopen after half term at 8.30am on Monday 2nd November 2020.

We will be implementing some additional measures and reinforcing those introduced in September to ensure that WMG Academy remains a safe place for both staff and students, and we have detailed further information below.

Advice on Keeping Safe at School

Please be assured that we have a comprehensive risk assessment in place and that our building is 'COVID secure'. We have been very impressed with the maturity with which students have handled the measures in place to protect them; however, we ask that parents remind their children of the following:

- Students in all year groups are required to wear a face mask/covering at all times when in communal areas of the Academy building. This includes the main corridors, staircases and breakout areas, as well as the atrium, reception and canteen. Parents of students who are exempt from wearing a face mask/covering for medical reasons should make this known to the Academy by emailing solihull.info@wmgacademy.org.uk.
- Students should make use of the hand sanitising stations around the building. In line with guidance from the Department for Education, students should wash or sanitise their hands every time they enter or leave the building, move between learning bases and before and after they eat. Students who are unable to use hand sanitiser due to dermatological issues should make use of the Academy washrooms where soap, hot water and hand drying facilities are available.
- Wherever possible, students should socially distance themselves from their peers, learners in other academic year groups and staff. This is crucial to ensure that we minimise the number of 'close contacts' every student has to enable us to effectively isolate bubbles should any positive cases of COVID-19 be identified.
- Parents and students should take extra precautions when planning travel to and from the Academy. Wherever possible, we advise students to travel on foot, by bicycle or in a family car; however, we acknowledge many of our students travel long distances on public transport

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and we encourage these learners to adhere to relevant advice, including the use of face masks, when using buses, trains or taxis.

Advice on Self-Isolating

Whilst England returns to a period of tightened restrictions, it remains important that we as individuals take responsibility for our own health to protect those around us. It is therefore imperative that the Academy is aware of any suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19 so that we can limit the spread as necessary.

Should your son or daughter exhibit any of the recognised symptoms of COVID-19, please book a coronavirus test and keep them and any other members of the household at home until you receive the result. We would ask that you continue to keep the Academy informed as these symptoms evolve, including the result of any COVID-19 tests, even if they are negative.

The recognised symptoms of coronavirus are:

- a high temperature – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature);
- a new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or three or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual);
- a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal.

Examinations

For students who are sitting external resit GCSE Examinations in the next few weeks, these are going ahead as planned and you should continue to prepare accordingly. You will have received examination information instructions, but please be reminded that if you display symptoms or are asked to self-isolate then you cannot attend the examination.

At present, we expect the Summer Examination Series to take place as planned. It is expected that this series will start slightly later than in previous years.

Contingency Planning

As we saw in March, this situation is expected to evolve over the coming days and weeks, with further guidance expected from the Government on Monday and a vote in Parliament expected on Wednesday.

With this in mind, we would like to remind parents that we have a comprehensive contingency plan within our risk assessment that means we can quickly adapt our working practices to ensure we are compliant with the restrictions imposed whilst still able to provide a high-quality education.

Our contingency plans will be reviewed over the coming days as more information becomes available on these restrictions. We ask that parents regularly check their email inboxes and the Academy's website for updates. We anticipate that we will undertake a parental survey early this week to obtain information about access to internet enabled devices and the need for 'small school' provision for

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vulnerable students and the children of key workers, should schools be directed to close, or directed to move to the next tier of COVID intervention where schools would operate a year group weekly rota system of onsite lessons one week followed by remote working the next.

Next Steps

Once again, we appreciate the support we have received from parents and students over the first half of the Autumn Term. The wellbeing of the WMG Academy community is always our priority and we are working tirelessly to ensure staff and students are safe whilst still able to access high-quality education.

We are looking forward to seeing all of our students back in the Academy on Monday morning and know we will enjoy your full support as we move forward.

Yours faithfully,



Mrs K Tague
Executive Principal



Mr S Tait
Associate Principal

Public Health England Advice

What to do if your child develops symptoms of COVID 19

If your child develops symptoms of COVID-19, they should remain at home for at least 10 days from the date when their symptoms appeared. Anyone with symptoms will be eligible for testing and this can be arranged via <https://www.nhs.uk/ask-for-a-coronavirus-test> or by calling 119.

All other household members who remain well must stay at home and not leave the house for 14 days. This includes anyone in your 'Support Bubble'.

The 14-day period starts from the day when the first person in the house became ill.

Household members should not go to work, school or public areas and exercise should be taken within the home. If you require help with buying groceries, other shopping or picking up medication, or walking a dog, you should ask friends or family. Alternatively, you can order your shopping online and medication by phone or online.

Household members staying at home for 14 days will greatly reduce the overall amount of infection the household could pass on to others in the community

If you are able can, move any vulnerable individuals (such as the elderly and those with underlying health conditions) out of your home, to stay with friends or family for the duration of the home isolation period

Please see the link to the PHE 'Stay at Home' Guidance:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>

How to stop COVID-19 spreading

There are things you can do to help reduce the risk of you and anyone you live with getting ill with COVID-19, including:

- wash your hands with soap and water often – do this for at least 20 seconds
- use hand sanitiser gel if soap and water are not available
- wash your hands as soon as you get home
- cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze
- put used tissues in the bin immediately and wash your hands afterwards

Further Information

Further information is available at

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>