

31st December 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

RE: Staggered Return in January 2021 and Lateral Flow Testing

We hope that you have had a restful and enjoyable Christmas despite the ongoing restrictions and that you and your family are in good health. Please let us take this opportunity to wish you a happy and healthy 2021 and apologise for writing to you during the holidays. You will be aware that the Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Education made a series of announcements yesterday evening which we would like to update you about.

Government Announcement

On Wednesday 30th December 2020, the UK Government announced *‘that secondary schools in England will have a delayed start to term in order to help with breaking chains of transmission and to assist with keeping all of our children and all of our education settings as safe as we can.’* The Government’s guidance for the start of term is summarised as below:

- *During the first week of term, beginning on or just after 4th January, secondary schools and colleges will focus on the rollout of mass testing to help find asymptomatic cases. They will provide face-to-face education for vulnerable children and the children of critical workers, and prioritise resources for remote education for exam year groups in line with what they would receive in class and to all other years as resources permit*
- *During the second week of term, beginning on 11th January, secondary schools and colleges will start their programme of testing, prioritising staff, those students in schools and colleges and the exam cohorts. Schools and colleges will be able to bring students back to face-to-face tuition as testing is rolled out. Remote education will be provided to all pupils this week prior to return to school or college*
- *All students will return to secondary schools and colleges for face-to-face education by 18 January*
- *Externally assessed vocational exams scheduled to take place during January will go ahead as planned.*

You will recall that secondary schools were asked in the last week of the Autumn Term to facilitate onsite mass lateral flow testing. The above announcement allows schools more time to prepare the facilities to offer this testing. It is hoped that once this has been achieved we will be able to ensure that students and staff can remain in face-to-face learning instead of having periods of self-isolation.

As you will understand, this announcement does impact the arrangements for the start of term originally detailed in our letter dated 18th December and the updated arrangements are detailed in this letter.

Arrangements for Staggered Return to School

Firstly, please note that all external examinations will be taking place as planned. Students should continue to revise and prepare; however, there will be no onsite revision sessions. A full list of the exams taking place is included in the ‘External Examinations’ section of this letter.

WMG Academy for Young Engineers, Chelmsley Road, Chelmsley Wood, B37 5FD

Week Beginning Monday 4th January 2021

- Monday 4th January will remain an INSET day as planned. There will be no online or face-to-face provision for all students.
- From Tuesday 5th January, all students in all year groups will be able to access online and remote learning. More details on remote learning are included later in this letter.
- Small school provision for vulnerable students and the children of key workers will begin on Tuesday 5th January and will continue for as long as there is demand until all year groups have returned to onsite learning. Vulnerable students will receive a second letter later today to confirm their place. Parents who are key workers are asked to book a place by emailing solihull.info@wmgacademy.org.uk.
- There will be **NO** online learning for students in Years 10 and 12 on Friday 8th January to allow time for staff to access lateral flow testing.
- All external examinations will take place as planned for students in Year 13 undertaking their BTEC Unit 6 or BTEC Business exams.

Week Beginning 11th January 2021

- All students in Years 11 and 13 will return to face-to-face teaching in the Academy building on Monday 11th January. We anticipate that lateral flow testing for students in these years will start on this date and continue over the course of the week.
- Students in Years 10 and 12 will continue to work remotely with small school provision remaining available for students in these year groups who have confirmed places.

Week Beginning 18th January 2021

- All students in Years 10 and 12 will return to face-to-face teaching in the Academy building on Monday 18th January. We anticipate that lateral flow testing for students in these years will start on this date and continue over the course of the week.

Lateral Flow Testing

We will write to parents again in the coming days regarding lateral flow testing for all students as this information becomes available and to seek parental consent for your child to take part; however, we wanted to provide parents with a brief overview of how we foresee the mass testing programme working as soon as possible.

- All staff and students will be offered lateral flow testing as they return to school in January. Initially, these resources will be focused on staff and students attending small school. As students in other groups begin to return from Monday 11th January, testing will be more widely available.
- Students will initially be tested twice. Firstly, as close as possible to their date of return to onsite teaching and then again between 3 and 5 days later. This will help to identify any asymptomatic carriers of coronavirus. Any positive results from the lateral flow tests will need to be confirmed with a PCR test available through the national NHS Test and Trace programme.

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- You will be aware that during the Autumn Term we had to ask various groups of students to go home and self-isolate as they had been seen as a close contact of somebody who had subsequently tested positive for COVID-19. To minimise this disruption moving forward, students identified as close contacts will be offered daily lateral flow testing for 7 working days. If this offer is declined, usual periods of self-isolation will then need to apply.

As you will appreciate, there is a lot for us to prepare to get the testing procedures up and running in the next few days. We aim to ensure all students can be tested in line with the timescales above but want parents to understand that delays may occur whilst we ensure adequate and safe numbers of trained staff are available and whilst we receive resources from our suppliers.

Online and Remote Learning Reminders

All students will be able to access online learning from home via Google Classroom and Google Meet which can both be accessed via RM Unify. Students are well practised at accessing their online lessons, but more information is available at the end of this letter.

Please remember that there are no online lessons for pastoral tutor times, enrichment sessions or PE and RSHE. These subjects will recommence onsite when students return to face-to-face learning.

Similarly, we have had to make some adaptations to the usual day structure to facilitate online lessons:

Onsite [55-minute lessons]		Online [45-minute lessons]	
Period 1	08.30 – 09.25	Period 1	08.35 – 09.20
Period 2	09.25 – 10.20	Period 2	09.30 – 10.15
Pastoral	10.20 – 10.45	Pastoral	
Break	10.45 – 11.05	Break	
Period 3	11.05 – 12.00	Period 3	11.10 – 11.55
Period 4	12.00 – 12.55	Period 4	12.05 – 12.50
Lunch	12.55 – 13.30	Lunch	
Period 5	13.30 – 14.25	Period 5	13.35 – 14.20
Period 6	14.25 – 15.20	Period 6	14.30 – 15.15
Break*	15.20 – 15.35	Break*	
Period 7*	15.35 – 16.30	Period 7*	15.40 – 16.25

* Sessions identified with the asterisk do not take place on Monday or Friday

External Examinations Timetable

Please be reminded of the scheduled external examinations as below.

Date	Start Time	Year	Option	Code	Title
06/01/2021	09:00	13			BTEC Business
07/01/2021 onwards	12 hours	13			BTEC Unit 6 Exam
11/01/2021	09:00	13	31706H	31706H01	ENGINEERING PRINCIPLES
12/01/2021	09:00	11	R105	R105/01	ENGINEERING:DES SPECS USER REQ WRTN
12/01/2021	13:45	11	R109	R109/01	ENGINEERING:ENG MAT PRCS & PRD WRTN
12/01/2021	13:45	11	R113	R113/01	ENGINEERING:ELCTRNC PRINCIPLES WTN

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Free School Meals

Parents of children in receipt of Free School Meals (FSM) will continue to receive vouchers in the same way they have done so during the Christmas Break. These vouchers will be discontinued when your child returns to face-to-face learning. Children attending small school who are in receipt of FSM should use the vouchers to purchase packed lunches.

Next Steps and Ongoing Communication

From 8.00am on Monday 4th January, the Academy switchboard will reopen. In the meantime, and for non-urgent enquiries, we ask parents to contact the Academy via email at solihull.info@wmgacademy.org.uk. This email inbox will continue to be monitored every day.

We very much hope that 2021 will bring a brighter and calmer year than what we have all experienced over the past 12 months. We recognise that further challenges lie ahead, but are determined to ensure that our students receive the very best level of care, support and education. Please be reassured that we are doing all we can to safeguard the wellbeing of the Academy community and will continue to update parents accordingly over the coming days, weeks and months.

We wish you all a happy new year and an enjoyable final few days of the holiday.

Yours faithfully,



Mrs K Tague
Executive Principal



Mr S Tait
Associate Principal



Google Classroom for Students and Parents at Home

This document includes general guidance for Students who are working from home and Parents who wish to receive updates via Google Classroom, with respect to their child's work.

Students

WMG Academy uses Google Classroom exclusively for the setting of coursework and homework. All students should be familiar with the use of Google Classroom, but different PC configurations may mean that it is slightly different when at home, to the usual classroom PC or Laptop.

Here is a shortcut method to logging into Google Apps from any PC.

1. Open a Browser
 - a. The preference is to use Google Chrome
 - b. Other browsers will work fine, but may limit some functions
 - c. Google Chrome can be easily loaded by searching 'download google chrome' Password
2. Navigate to www.google.co.uk
3. Click on the circular icon in the top right of the browser and log in using your Academy email address and password. 
4. Once logged in, use the nine squares to access the Google Apps available to you. 

Parents

Parents CANNOT log directly into Google Classroom. They receive an email from Google with a regular update as to the work being set and a student's progress. When Google Classroom was configured, earlier this year, you would have received an email from Google asking you if you wish to receive these updates. If you have a Gmail Account, you can elect to receive daily updates, other email addresses can only receive weekly.

If you are not receiving these, please email g.jacklin@wmgacademy.org.uk with: -

1. Your child's name (First and Last Name)
2. Their date of birth
3. The email address you wish to use to receive updates

We will then update our records and you will receive a new email from Google asking you to confirm you wish to receive these updates.