



Friday 26<sup>th</sup> February 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

### Return to School Update for Parents

I hope you and your family remain safe and well.

Following on from this week's announcement from the Prime Minister, I wanted to confirm with you the plans for reopening Isca Academy to all students from the 8<sup>th</sup> of March. We are delighted to be able to welcome students back to face to face learning and try to return to some sort of normality; even if we are not quite yet back to the full range of wider school opportunities and events which we all miss so much.

Beyond the logistics of returning, students may feel apprehensive about returning to school after being away, which is totally understandable. Some may be excited to see school friends again and to return to a more fixed routine. Or maybe a bit of both. Either way, please reassure them that a great deal of our focus has been on preparing for their return to ensure that they feel supported both academically and emotionally from the start. As always, our partnership with parents will be crucial in seeing the students through these new challenges, so please do contact us at any time if you need to make us aware of anything which may help your child.

I am very conscious that there is a lot of information to send out over the coming days and so I will try to break the information down into various subjects and across several updates, so that you do not get too overloaded.

#### Testing prior to returning to school

In accordance with government guidance, the school is required to offer 3 tests for all students on their return to school. Each test should be 3-5 days apart and this works on a consent only basis. Thereafter, students will receive home testing kits and more information will follow on this in due course.

If students do not have consent to be tested, they should return as usual with their year group on the day stated below.

Essential School will continue to operate for our students until their year group returns to school.

Year Group	Date of First Test	First Day Returning to School	Date of Second Test	Date of Third Test	Dates Essential School Still Open
11	8 <sup>th</sup> March	<b>9<sup>th</sup> March</b>	11 <sup>th</sup> March	16 <sup>th</sup> March	8 <sup>th</sup> March Only
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9	10 <sup>th</sup> March	<b>11<sup>th</sup> March</b>	15 <sup>th</sup> March	18 <sup>th</sup> March	8 <sup>th</sup> – 10 <sup>th</sup> March Inclusive
8	9 <sup>th</sup> March	<b>10<sup>th</sup> March</b>	12 <sup>th</sup> March	17 <sup>th</sup> March	8 <sup>th</sup> – 9 <sup>th</sup> March Inclusive
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Along with the other protective measures we are taking, these tests will help staff and students to remain in school safely. Up to one-third of people who have COVID-19 experience no symptoms at all. By testing, we will help to stop the virus spread and help to keep our school open as safely as possible.

All consenting students who have been attending our Essential School since January have taken the tests and staff have also been taking them twice per week.

Students will be offered a testing time-slot by tutor group and we will contact you directly next week with confirmation of the time for your child to report to the Sports Hall for testing (if consent is received).

When arriving at school, students should make their way to the entrance by the Sports Hall. On arrival, they will be given instructions on how to undertake the test prior to completing the test itself; following this students will need to go home. This process should take no longer than 20 minutes. It is important that students maintain stringent social distancing when travelling to and from school and also during the testing process, otherwise they risk having to isolate for ten days if identified as a close contact.

Students do not need to wear uniform when attending school for their first test. Please ensure they arrive ready for their start time and that they wear their face covering.

### **Consent for testing**

In order to obtain consent for your child to have Lateral Flow Tests, we would appreciate you completing the consent form (if you have not already done so) which is available here: [Lateral Flow Testing Consent Form](#)

Further information about the testing is available below and on our website:

[Test and Trace – COVID-19 Testing for Students](#)

[How to do your test](#)

If you have any questions at all with regards to lateral flow testing, please do not hesitate to contact us.

### **School organisation**

On their full return to school, students will follow their usual school timetable and they will be given a copy of this either when they attend testing or as they arrive at school. Students will be based for tutor time in the same year group zones and should continue to use the same year group specific entrances as before to enter the site in the morning.

The key change will be that students will be encouraged to wear a face covering at all times whilst in the school building, including all lessons, with the exception of PE. The usual exemption criteria applies and if a parent feels that their child should be exempt from wearing a face covering then they should email [adminoffice@iscaexeter.co.uk](mailto:adminoffice@iscaexeter.co.uk)

The government have also updated their guidance for parents and the link to the document can be [found here](#).

I will write to you again next week with more information to support your child with their safe return to school. Our students are incredibly resilient and resourceful and I have no doubt that they will quickly take being back at school in their stride, as they have all the challenges presented by covid-19 thus far. We very much look forward to welcoming them back. We have missed them!

Best wishes,

Aimee Mitchell  
Headteacher