



26th February 2021

Wider school opening

NHS Test and Trace: COVID-19 testing

Dear Parent/Carer

I hope that you and your family are safe and well at this time. The government announced at the start of this week that schools across our country will be opening to all learners from 8th March 2021. We have continued to be updated with additional guidance around this wider opening and are now in a position to share with you our plans for welcoming your child back to school.

We will continue to work to keep Ninestiles, An Academy as safe as possible. You may have heard that testing for those without coronavirus symptoms will be taking place across all schools and colleges in the country using new, quicker COVID-19 tests known as 'lateral flow tests'. 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 coronavirus experience no symptoms. By testing, we will help to stop the virus spread and help to keep our academy open as safely as possible. The testing is voluntary, but I would encourage everyone who will be attending our school to take it.

Most of our students who have continued to attend our academy during this period of lockdown, as part of our key worker and vulnerable learner group, have received regular testing throughout this period and will continue to do so over the next three weeks. The details below for students who are returning to the academy do not apply to them, as they will continue to attend in the same way that they have been since January 2021.

For all other students who have not been attending during lockdown, we will be testing those who want to participate before their return to school from 8th March 2021. Testing will be offered free of charge and all learners who have consent will attend our site for a test on their year group day detailed below.

Testing day

Students are to arrive at the academy site at their allotted time, which will be shared very soon in a separate communication. It is important that students are punctual for their test. For the testing day only, they do not need to wear academy uniform. They will enter the site wearing a face covering (unless they have an exemption card) and will be guided to the testing area where they will administer their own test with direction from our qualified team. Once they have completed their test they will leave the academy site and go home. They will socially distance themselves from all staff and students during their time on site and we ask that they socially distance themselves

from others not in their home bubbles on the way to and from the academy. Notification of the test result will be emailed, usually within 30 minutes of taking the test.

Return to learning day

Students are to attend the academy no later than 08:30 ready for a prompt 08:40 start on their return to learning day, wearing full, perfect academy uniform, bringing with them their bag, full equipment and face covering. Please contact the academy if you require any support with this. In line with our usual uniform expectations, which can be found on the school website, students in Years 7, 8 and 9 should not wear make-up and Years 10 and 11 should only wear subtle make-up with no heavy colourings or false lashes. Jewellery should be a maximum of one pair of earrings and one ring and necklace/chain worn under uniform. Hair should be sensibly styled with no extreme designs of colours. False nails and coloured varnish are not permitted.

Students may continue to wear Ninestiles branded HAL kit on days where they have a HAL lesson but must do so with the addition of their Ninestiles blazer over the top.

Students will continue to use their year specific entrances and should ensure enough time is allowed to arrive at 08:30 ready for admission.

Students in the year group returning to the academy will continue to attend school in person from their return to learning day.

Face coverings

All students will be expected to wear face coverings when in internal areas of the academy, which now includes classroom areas where they are not able to socially distance themselves from others. These are mandatory at our school unless your child has an exemption card, which they must carry with them at all times. Please support us to keep you and your family safe by ensuring your child has a mask with them every day.

Calendar for return

	Testing Day (at allotted time)	Return to learning day (arrive no later than 08:30)	Year groups in school for face-to-face lessons	Year groups receiving remote learning offer
Friday 5 March 2021	Year 11			
Monday 8 March 2021	Year 10	Year 11	Year 11	Years 7, 8, 9 (Year 10 uploaded work)

Tuesday 9 March 2021	Year 7	Year 10	Years 10, 11	Years 8, 9 (Year 7 uploaded work)
Wednesday 10 March 2021	Year 8	Year 7	Years 7, 10, 11	Year 9 (Year 8 uploaded work)
Thursday 11 March 2021	Year 9	Year 8	Years 7, 8, 10, 11	(Year 9 uploaded work)
Friday 12 March 2021		Year 9	All years	

I enclose an instructional leaflet with some more information around how the testing process works.

To support us in making the testing process go as smoothly as possible, **please ensure that your child knows the following information:** Address including postcode of their primary guardian and the email address and phone number registered for the test response.

Students aged under 16 years of age are not able to consent to their own medical testing without a parent or carer present. Our online consent form can be accessed here:

bit.ly/Ninestilesconsentform

If you need a paper copy of this form, please collect one from Reception.

We would recommend that you have a conversation with your child at home in preparation for testing and completion of the form. Through returning this form electronically, we will be able to swiftly prepare for testing your child. If you require any support in completing this form please contact Reception on 0121 628 1311 or at enquiry@ninstiles.org.uk

Those taking the test will be supervised by trained staff. The 'lateral flow' tests are quick and easy using a swab of their nose and throat.

To support social distancing, we request that parents or carers do not accompany students onto the academy site for this test.

What if the test completed in school is positive?

We will contact the parent or carer to discuss arrangements around your child and members of your home bubble needing to self-isolate for a 10-day period.

What happens if the test completed in school is negative?

If the test result is negative then your child will be welcome to attend school from the return to learning day for their year group. A small number of students may need to repeat the test if the first test was invalid or void for some reason.

What if a close contact at school tests positive?

We are carrying out a safety-first approach to testing to avoid this scenario, as if a close contact at school tests positive, they will also have to self-isolate for 10 days. Measures will be put in place to mitigate against students coming into close contact with other students and staff members and we ask that you counsel your child to ensure that this does not happen during their journey to and from school for testing.

What if I develop symptoms?

This testing programme at school is for people with no symptoms. If you develop symptoms at any time (such as a high temperature; a new, continuous cough; or a loss or change to their sense of smell or taste) you must immediately self-isolate, and book a test by calling 119 or visiting <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>.

Remote learning

To allow us to fully prepare for the wider opening of our school, remote learning will continue for those students who are awaiting their return until Thursday 11th March 2021, with all year groups attending the academy from Friday 12th March 2021. To support us with testing and our preparations, work will be uploaded for students on Wednesday 3rd March 2021 but there will be no live lessons on that day. On each year group's testing day, there will be work provided but there will be no live lessons just for that year group on that day.

Safety briefings, which will include details around the testing procedures at the academy, will be taking place remotely with all students prior to their return and we will shortly be contacting all learners so they are able to attend these to fully prepare for their return.

We are really looking forward to welcoming your child back to school and thank you for your support in ensuring that we can keep all of our community as safe as possible.

Yours faithfully



Alex Hughes

Principal