

Dear Parent/ Carer,

Mass testing and the return to school in January 2021

I hope that you and your families are well and that you have managed to have some rest and relaxation over the holiday season. I had written a completely different letter just three days ago but as I am sure you are aware, the government has been forced to respond to the changing health picture and as a consequence, so have I. Please accept my apologies for contacting you during the break but I wanted you to have up-to-date information to hand before the school re-opens next week.

The National Picture

You may have seen in the news that the government has announced mass testing in secondary schools and a delayed, staggered return for mainstream pupils next week. Initial plans to keep primary schools open were potentially subject to legal challenge and as a result primary schools in London are also required to delay the start of the Spring term.

The Local Picture

The situation at Nightingale Community Academy (NCA) is not subject to change following the latest announcements. **We will open for ALL pupils on Wednesday 6th January.**

“... special schools will all return to face-to-face education from the start of term as planned, with individual special schools being offered greater flexibility on face-to-face attendance of pupils and students in the first week of term. This will enable them to appropriately mobilise their mass testing programme.” DfE (2021)

I have been working with the senior team to put in place contingency plans that will enable us to roll out the testing programme for pupils and staff whilst maintaining as normal a routine as is possible. Naturally, a number of staff members and pupils will have been affected by the surge in Coronavirus cases over the past fortnight and it is critical that we keep lines of communication open so that we can keep everybody in the school community as safe as possible. With this in mind if you have any questions or concerns please use the contact details at the end of this message to get in touch. If you have recently changed your email or telephone number please contact reception urgently. There will be a limited online educational offer for those who are self-isolating at present but the expectation is that children attend school as detailed here:

Monday 4th & Tuesday 5th January – STAFF CPD – no pupils in school.

Wednesday 6th January – All year groups return. Year 11 Hospitality Examination will take place as planned at 09:30. Candidates will be contacted directly and should arrive in school at 08:30

I will shortly be sending you another letter with details of the mass testing programme and a consent letter to enable us to carry out the test on your child and share his medical information following the outcome of any test. I would encourage all parent/ carers to provide consent as this will enable us to keep pupils and staff in education when contacts develop symptoms; avoiding the need to close large sections of the school as happened last term.

The testing programme at NCA is for people with no symptoms. If your child develops 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) they must immediately self-isolate, and book a test by calling 119 or visiting <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>.

As always, we try to provide as much detail as possible in our communication to parents and carers but if you have any questions or feel like we have missed something please get in touch and let us know. We routinely update our Covid-19 Risk Assessment and responses in line with Government guidance and you can email info@nightingaleca.org or call reception at any time (020 8874 9096) for the latest copy.

Finally, these are difficult times for many and as a school community we would like to make sure that everybody is looked after where physical and emotional wellbeing is concerned. If you or your loved ones are experiencing hardship we may be able to provide practical help or signpost you to somebody who can. Please contact us and we will do our best to support you.

Best wishes for a prosperous and hopefully, more settled 2021.



Andre Bailey
Principal