



23<sup>rd</sup> August 2021 – Reopening Plans for The Link Academy

Dear Parents/Carers

**Re: Re-opening plans and autumn coronavirus (COVID-19) testing arrangements**

I hope you and your families continue to be safe and well. With the end of the summer holidays rapidly approaching, I am writing to you regarding the arrangements for the new academic year, starting in September. At The Link Academy we will continue to comply with Government guidance and will continue with some caution. As a minimum we will continue to:

1. Expect everyone in the academy (unless exempt) to wear a face covering in indoor spaces, including classrooms. This will be reviewable on a regular basis.
2. To promote good hygiene for everyone - use of handwashing and hand sanitising
3. Maintain our enhanced cleaning regimes
4. Keep rooms well ventilated
5. Follow Public Health and Government advice on testing, self-isolation and managing confirmed cases of COVID-19.

A key part of the Government's plans for a safe return to school after the summer holidays is the mass testing of all secondary learners and staff, prior to their return to the classroom using 'lateral flow tests'. This is a similar approach to the one taken when schools re-opened in March. Learners will be tested twice at the academy when they return. Therefore, this will mean a 'staggered' start to school re-opening, which is outlined in the schedule below.

Year Group	1 <sup>st</sup> Covid Test (attend school ONLY for the Covid test)	Covid Test Time (by surname)	Return Date Full Time at School	Return Start and End Time
Year 7	Fri 3 <sup>rd</sup> Sept	A-F 11:30am G-L 12:15pm M-S 1:00pm T-Z 1:45pm	Tues 7 <sup>th</sup> Sept	8:40am – 2:45pm (entry via main car park)
Year 8	Mon 6 <sup>th</sup> Sept	A-F 11:30am G-L 12:15pm M-S 1:00pm T-Z 1:45pm	Wed 8 <sup>th</sup> Sept	8:40am – 2:45pm (entry via main car park)
Year 9	Tues 7 <sup>th</sup> Sept	A-F 8:30am G-L 9:15am M-S 10:00am T-Z 10:45am	Thurs 9 <sup>th</sup> Sept	8:40am – 2:45pm (entry via main car park)
Year 10	Mon 6 <sup>th</sup> Sept	A-F 8:30am G-L 9:15am M-S 10:00am T-Z 10:45am	Wed 8 <sup>th</sup> Sept	8:40am – 2:45pm (entry via Simms Lane)
Year 11	Fri 3 <sup>rd</sup> Sept	A-F 8:30am G-L 9:15am M-S 10:00am T-Z 10:45am	Tues 7 <sup>th</sup> Sept	8:40am – 2:45pm (entry via Simms Lane)

## The Link Academy

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Principal: Emma Edwards-Morgan



This is the most effective way to reduce the risk of transmission and support the continuation of face-to-face education. We recognise, however, the need to minimise any disruption to education and to continue to support your child's mental wellbeing. The government will continue to review the future need for testing in light of any changes to the public health situation.

### **Lateral flow test frequently asked questions (FAQs):**

#### ***How many lateral flow tests will learners have?***

Year 7-11 learners will be tested twice at the academy (see the schedule above for the first test). Please note, for the first test, learners will attend the academy at their designated slot by surname and then return straight home. They do not need to wear full school uniform on their first test date.

The second Covid Test will take place during the Academy Day when your child has returned to school. After these two tests, parents/carers will be provided with home testing kits (by the academy) which should be used twice weekly. No further tests will be carried out at the academy.

#### ***Do I need to provide consent for my children to have lateral flow tests?***

Yes. Most parents/carers have already completed online consent forms (in March). For parents/carers of learners new to the academy, and those who have not previously given consent, this online consent form needs to be completed <https://rb.gy/v3lvww>. The parent/carer must provide consent for learners younger than 16 years old. If parents/carers want to withdraw consent, then they should contact [info@thelinkacademy.org.uk](mailto:info@thelinkacademy.org.uk).

#### ***Is testing compulsory?***

No, testing is not compulsory, but it is strongly advised. This is about the safety of all of our learners, their family members and staff. If learners come to school who have COVID-19 asymptomatically, this can lead to other learners and staff becoming ill, impacting on everybody's safety and the education of large numbers of learners.

#### ***What is involved in a lateral flow test?***

These tests involve learners taking their own swabs whilst trained staff oversee the process, and analyse the results. Results are obtained after about half an hour, so the whole process takes less than 45 minutes, including registration. You can find more information about this type of test using the following link: [Understanding lateral flow antigen testing for people without symptoms](#).

#### ***What happens if my child's lateral flow test (taken either in school or at home) is positive?***



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Learners with a positive lateral flow test result must self-isolate and will need to get a free PCR test, continuing to self-isolate whilst awaiting the result. If the PCR test is taken within 2 days of the positive lateral flow test, and is negative, it overrides the lateral flow test and the learner can return to school, as long as they do not have COVID-19 symptoms.

***What do I do if my child has COVID-19 symptoms?***

Mass testing in schools is for asymptomatic cases of the virus only. If your child is displaying symptoms of COVID-19, they **must not** attend school until they have received a negative test result from the more reliable external PCR test. Your family must continue to follow NHS and government guidance on self-isolation and testing where symptoms of COVID are present. The most common symptoms of COVID-19 are well known (cough, fever and loss or change of taste or smell) but more recently, we had learners testing positive after displaying a range of symptoms including headaches, stomach cramps, runny nose or diarrhoea. If in any doubt, please keep your child off school and get a more reliable external PCR test via the [NHS](https://www.nhs.uk).

***Does my child still need to self-isolate if someone in our household has COVID-19 symptoms or has tested positive?***

No. From 16 August, anyone who is fully vaccinated or aged under 18 years and 6 months [is not required to self-isolate](#).

***You must report your child's test results, even if their result is negative or void.***

Reporting results is easy. Go to [report a COVID-19 lateral flow test result](#) or call 119 free from a mobile or landline. Lines are open every day, 7am to 11pm. Support is available in 200 languages as well as British Sign Language. You should also keep a note of and share your child's results with their academy. Please continue to encourage your child to test twice weekly and report the results until the end of the summer term.

We are working hard to make sure all our buildings and spaces are as safe as possible. I am sure that by working together we can continue to keep our community as safe as possible as we do return to a more 'normal' school year in September.

Yours sincerely

Mrs E. Edwards-Morgan  
Principal



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