

Wednesday 10th February 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

RE: COVID19 Update – February Half Term Break + Spring Term 2

I trust you are safe and well. I would like to provide a brief overview on the updates that have occurred since my last communication to you.

Thank you to all parents and carers who have managed so well to support their child(ren) with Remote Learning whilst undertaking a multitude of other roles and responsibilities. It has been challenging for everyone and as we journey into the new year we are no doubt everyday getting closer to some form of 'normality'.

When will I be returning to onsite learning at OPA?

The Prime Minister continues to state that the earliest date schools will return to face-to-face teaching is **Monday 8 March 2021**. Schools will be given two weeks' notice of any return, so I expect an announcement by the Government on **Monday 22nd February 2021**. It is not yet known as to whether all students will return at once or whether it will be a staggered return. As and when we receive the update, we will let you know.

Is there an update on the GCSE and Vocational qualifications?

The Department for Education (DfE) launched a consultation on how exams will be replaced, and grades awarded this summer and this is now closed. The DfE are due to publish details on the summer exams procedures on **Monday 22nd February 2021**. As and when we receive the update, we will let you know.

Is OPA open over half term?

The Government does not expect schools and colleges to open during February half term to students, including vulnerable and key worker students. Therefore, the academy will not be open to students during the half term week (15 – 19 February).

Will students who are entitled to Free School Meals (FSM) receive vouchers over the half term break?

We have received confirmation that Thurrock council will provide FSM Vouchers during the half-term break as part of the COVID Winter Grant Scheme. We have updated the council on who is entitled to receive these vouchers and we have been told that vouchers will be distributed during the half term week.

If my child has a COVID19 positive result over the half term break what should I do?

The DfE has advised that schools must provide 'Track and Trace' if a student or staff member tests positive for COVID-19, having developed symptoms within 48 hours of being last in school (eg the child or staff member was in school on Thursday 11th February or Friday 12th February and then went on to be symptomatic on Saturday 13th February or Sunday 14th February). The school will assist in identifying close contacts and advise on self-isolation, as the child / staff member may have been infectious whilst in school. If this is the case then the parent/carer of the child or the staff member must email the

academy on covid19@ormistonpark.org.uk clearly highlighting the following information within the email. A senior leader will then communicate with and advise on the self-isolation period for any contacts:

- Name of person with COVID19 symptoms
- Date of first symptoms
- Type of symptoms
- Date of test
- Date of test result
- Screenshot of test result
- Last day in the academy
- Contacts on the last 2 days in the academy at 1m for 1min+
- Contacts on the last 2 days in the academy at 1.5-2m for 15min+

The DfE advice for a child or staff member who has COVID19 symptoms from Monday 15th February, is to book a test immediately and contact NHS 119 and not the school.

Will students be tested for coronavirus upon return to on site learning at OPA?

The Government have asked schools and colleges to mass test students using lateral flow devices upon an initial return. It is not compulsory for us to participate, but as highlighted previously I am pleased to confirm that it is our current intention to do so. We have worked through the logistics of this operation and will have staff and resources in place to accommodate this. We do continue to test both student and staff regularly who are on site in ASCEND and keyworker provision. Further details, including a reissue on information about parental consent, will be sent out once we have confirmation of a return date. Please note that it is not the Government's intention to test students beyond an initial round in their first week back. However, this may change as the return plans are made available.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely,

Mark Roessler



Principal
Ormiston Park Academy