

## Dudley Academies Trust

Executive offices, Dudley College of Technology  
Priory Villa, 3 Ednam Road, Dudley, West  
Midlands, DY1 1HL

Chair of Board of Trustees: Lowell Williams  
Chief Executive: Jo Higgins



15 December 2021

Dear Parents/Carers

### **Re: Re-opening plans and January LFT testing arrangements**

We hope you and your families continue to be safe and well. With the end of term rapidly approaching, we are writing to you regarding the arrangements for our return to school in January.

At St James Academy, we will continue to comply with Government guidance. 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.
2. To promote good hygiene for everyone- use of handwashing and hand sanitising
3. Maintain our 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 Christmas 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 September. **Learners will be tested once at the academy when they return. They will then be expected to conduct a second test at home two to three days later.** Therefore, this will mean a 'staggered' start to school re-opening, which is outlined in the schedule overleaf.

*Please note: as some forms groups are changing in January, learners need to attend in the time slot for their **new** form.*



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Date	Year 11	Year 10	Year 9	Year 8	Year 7
<b>Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> Jan 2022</b>	Form groups will attend at the time shown for their LFT test, then remain in form time until break: 09.00 - 11SJ1 09.15 - 11SJ2 09.30 - 11SJ3 09.45 - 11SJ4 10.00 - 11SJ5 10.15 - 11SJ6  Normal timetable resumes P3	Form groups will attend at the time shown below for testing, then <b>leave site and return home:</b>  11.00 – 10SJ1 11.15 – 10SJ2 11.30 – 10SJ3 11.45 – 10SJ4 12.00 – 10SJ5	Form groups will attend at the time shown below for testing, then <b>leave site and return home:</b>  12.45 – 9SJ1 13.00 – 9SJ2 13.15 – 9SJ3 13.30 – 9SJ4 13.45 – 9SJ5	Not attending	Not attending
<b>Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> Jan 2022</b>	Normal timetable resumes	Normal timetable resumes	Normal timetable resumes	Form groups will attend at the time shown below for testing, then <b>leave site and return home:</b>  09.00 - 8SJ1 09.15 - 8SJ2 09.30 - 8SJ3 09.45 - 8SJ4 10.00 - 8SJ5 10.15 - 8SJ6 10.30 - 8SJ7	Form groups will attend at the time shown below for testing, then <b>leave site and return home:</b>  11.15 – 7SJ1 11.30 – 7SJ2 11.45 – 7SJ3 12.00 – 7SJ4 12.15 – 7SJ5 12.30 – 7SJ6 12.45 – 7SJ7
<b>Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> Jan 2022</b>	All year groups attend normal lessons	All year groups attend normal lessons	All year groups attend normal lessons	All year groups attend normal lessons	All year groups attend normal lessons

**NB – there is no requirement to wear uniform on days where learners are only coming in for testing.**



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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 once at the academy (see the schedule above). After this test, parents/carers will be provided with home testing kits (by the academy) which should be used regularly as per previous guidance. No further tests will be carried out at the academy at this stage.

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

Yes. Most parents/carers have already given consent previously via our online form. For any learner who is new to the school, or now wants to opt into the testing programme for the first time, this online consent form needs to be completed

<https://forms.office.com/r/jqtjUzEtXS>

The parent/carer must provide consent for learners younger than 16 years old. If parents/carers want to withdraw consent, then they should contact me on [scolel@stjamesacademy.org.uk](mailto:scolel@stjamesacademy.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 asymptotically, 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.](#)



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

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 current 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](#).

### **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](#).

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 resume the school year in January.

Yours sincerely,



Simon Cole  
Assistant Principal