

23 February 2021

Dear parents and carers

### **RE: Reopening on 8<sup>th</sup> March and Lateral Flow Device Testing at BOA**

I hope you have all had a good half-term break and that your family members are all well.

I will be contacting you with a lot of information over the next week or so, especially as there are a lot of updates expected from the UK Government and the Department for Education (DfE). Apologies – as a result – for what might be a long-winded first letter. I feel it is important, however, to keep you up to date so that you can make an informed decision.

#### **The reopening of schools and lateral flow device testing:**

The Prime Minister announced that all schools will reopen from Monday 8<sup>th</sup> March and the official guidance states that secondary schools should operate a ‘phased return over the week of 8 March to allow students to be offered testing on return’. The testing refers to the Lateral Flow Device Testing (LFDT), which students can self-administer in our newly-installed testing bays (currently set up in the Fitness Suite on Floor 1). The tests take a couple of minutes to complete and results are returned within 30 minutes.

I have spoken to the DfE to clarify the guidance and students should receive three tests, which must be 3 to 5 days apart. After the third test, students can continue to self-test from home (more information to follow, when I receive it). This will mean that, during the week commencing 8 March, students will return to BOA on the following days:

Monday 8<sup>th</sup> March: Year 13

Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> March: Years 10 and 11

Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> March: Year 12

*Please note: The above indicates each year group’s first day back at the academy, after which the usual timetable will run. Remote learning will continue for Years 10, 11 and 12 on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> March and for Year 12 on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> March.*

#### **Lateral Flow Device Testing (LFDT):**

Due to the numbers of students we have in each year group, it will not be possible for all students to take a test as soon as they arrive. From looking at the number of testing bays and the number of trained staff available, we will be able to test up to 30 students every 30 minutes (although we must account for start times, break times and lunch times). This means that students will potentially return to their classes ahead of the LFDT and will be called to the testing bay in small groups. Whilst students are waiting for their LFDT, we expect all to observe our usual systems of control:

- social distancing, where possible;
- regular handwashing and use of hand sanitiser;
- the use of face coverings around communal areas;
- the use of face coverings in classroom environments, where applicable;
- remaining at home if displaying symptoms or remaining at home if a family member is displaying symptoms of COVID-19.

If you would rather your child just attends the academy for their LFDT on their first day (rather than going to lessons first), please contact me and I can make the necessary arrangements. Ahead of your child's return to the academy, I will ensure you are aware of the dates and times of the LFDTs.

Please note the following:

- Guidance states that the tests are not mandatory, even though the UK Government strongly advises students to take them;
- Students will enter their details into the NHS website – via a smartphone or similar device – ahead of each test;
- Students who are 16 years of age and older are able to give their own consent;
- The UK Government has now removed the option of 'onsite 7-day testing' for students who have been in close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19. The guidance now states that any student who has been in close contact with a confirmed case will need to isolate at home for a 10-day period.

### **Complications surrounding the LFDTs and BOA's context:**

Guidance states that schools and academies must maintain their usual systems of control and that year groups must remain in 'bubbles', with opportunities for 'mixing' minimised through timetable arrangements. Firstly, this will mean that BOA's usual timetable arrangements will remain in place for the foreseeable future (and I will send a reminder of timings next week). Secondly, the testing on site causes the academy a problem as we must ensure all LFDTs are carried out within the strict 3 to 5-day window. As a result – and apologies in advance – we will have to ask certain Post-16 students to attend the academy for their LFDT on a day when they do not normally have lessons. We have kept this to a minimum and this will only affect certain Post-16 students on one occasion, as follows:

w/c 8<sup>th</sup> March:

The second LFDT for Year 13 students will be administered on Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> March.

w/c 15<sup>th</sup> March:

The second LFDT for Year 12 students will be administered on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> March.

I have been in contact with the DfE to ask if there is any leeway over the '3 to 5 day window' but – regrettably – we cannot find any alternatives. I will ensure that students receive the time and date of their appointment in good time, in order to make travel plans.

An overview of the testing days for each year group is as follows:

<b>08.03.2021</b>	<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>
Year Group	Year 13	Years 10 & 11	Year 12	Year 13	Years 10 & 11
<b>15.03.2021</b>	<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>
Year Group	Year 12	Year 13	Years 10 & 11	Year 12	

### **What I will need from you:**

To ensure I can plan for the exact number of students taking the LFDTs, it would be of great help to know how many are happy to have the tests on site. When I first sent out the consent forms, I received 127 responses (and I will contact you this afternoon to confirm receipt). For all other parents and students, please notify me whether or not you intend to have the LFDTs at BOA. To clarify, informing me you are not intending to be tested is simply for my own administrative purposes. It will also help me to avoid sending out 'annoying reminders'.

To save time, please notify me of your intention by using the following Microsoft Form: <https://bit.ly/2ZFwTYb>

Alternatively, please email me on [info@boa-academy.co.uk](mailto:info@boa-academy.co.uk)

**Good news stories:**

As I bring this letter to a close, I'd like to share an upcoming event:

Alfie Williams in Year 10 (Dance Pathway) will be on BBC 1's *The One Show* on Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> February from 7pm onwards. Alfie's family responded to *The One Show's* advertisement for teenager's experiences of life and education during lockdown. During the segment, Alfie speaks about how he continues to pursue his passion for the arts, despite the current lockdown restrictions. Congratulations to Alfie and I look forward to tuning in tomorrow.

Until I write again, I hope you all stay safe and well.

Best wishes



**Alistair Chattaway**  
**Principal**

Enc. Lateral Flow Device Testing Consent Form