

Friday, February 26th 2021

KLA School Re-opening Update (including Year 9 Parent Consultation Meetings, Thursday 4th & Friday 5th March)

Dear pupils, parents and carers,

I know that you will have been waiting patiently this week for me to contact everyone with details of how we intend to respond to the announcement earlier this week that schools will begin to reopen from Monday, March 8th. Your patience throughout this week has been hugely appreciated, and it has given me the time and space to be able to make the necessary plans to be able to welcome back all of our children, as we are desperate to do, and get back to something closer to normality! Please accept my thanks for your patience and apologies for the time this has taken.

I know you will of course be aware that this is not a simple undertaking! The combination of returning almost 1,000 children safely to face-to-face education together with the demands of administering up to 3,000 Lateral Flow Tests inside a week makes this a very challenging logistical exercise for any school, and we have been working flat-out this week to try to manage this.

I will divide the remainder of this Bulletin into specific sections for clarity – yet again, I must apologise for its length, but yet again there is just so much to share!

Pupils return to lessons on the morning of Monday, March 8th

The most important thing to share is that, currently, we expect to be able to welcome **all pupils back to KLA at 8.35 a.m. on Monday, March 8th**. Although, the Department for Education has said that schools can take a week or two to stagger this re-opening to accommodate the necessary testing, we are keen to get everyone back as fast as we possibly can. To make this happen, we will need to use every minute available to us next week to prepare, and therefore there will be some changes to home-schooling next week for the final few days, including our intention to hold parent consultation meetings for parents of pupils in Year 9 from 3.30pm on Thursday 4th until 3.00 p.m. on Friday 5th March, details of which are below.

COVID-19 Testing – all pupils in all years.

The government has asked all secondary schools to make arrangements for all students, where permission has been given, to undertake a series of three COVID-19 lateral flow tests at school as we return to face-to-face teaching. The government is allowing schools to use time before March 8th to start this testing process. Pupils taking the test will be supervised by trained staff and volunteers.

At KLA, we intend to administer the first of these three tests next week and will then administer the second and third tests in the following week during the school day.

The lateral flow tests are quick and easy to undertake, using a swab of the nose and throat. Results (which take around half an hour from testing) will be shared directly with the individual participant and parent by a text or email notification of a positive or negative result from the online NHS system. We have been successfully running testing stations at KLA since January for testing staff, so we are very confident that we can manage this safely and properly for your children.

In order to undertake this testing, we require consent from parents. We are collecting the consent information electronically via the following link – please be aware that the information is required by the NHS and is shared with them with the results of every test.

The link for submitting your consent details for your child to have a Lateral Flow Test for Covid is:

[King's Lynn Academy Covid Testing Consent Form](#)

Tests are not required as a condition of a pupil's return to school – they are entirely voluntary - but strongly encouraged. I will place further information including an NHS FAQ document for parents on the KLA website later today, along with a video produced this week by Mrs Roberts and Mrs Barrett explaining the testing process for pupils.

We intend to use the school's online parent evening booking system to provide appointments for pupils. We have avoided administering tests by year group as we are aware that that could make life more difficult for those of you with children in different year groups – this way you can bring all of your children to be tested simultaneously. The link for booking these tests is below (please leave the box with your children's Head of Year checked when booking, as the system needs to have a member of staff 'responsible' for each appointment to work!)

The link for booking Lateral Flow Tests for your children is via the Schoolcloud software, which is also the way to make parents evening appointments for parents of Year 9 children next week. An introduction to using Schoolcloud is attached to this bulletin.

<https://kingslynnacademy.schoolcloud.co.uk/>

Students must only be on site for their appointment on these days, and must then return immediately back to their home – the national lockdown is still in place. They may be accompanied by one adult to the school but must not travel in friendship groups.

Students must not attend their appointment or come onto school site if they have any Covid-19 symptoms: new, continuous dry cough; high temperature; loss or change to sense of smell or taste. If they have any of these symptoms, please arrange for a test at your local testing site.

To make sure that we have the ability and capacity to manage this testing, we will be ceasing live MS Teams teaching on Tuesday (although Thursday 4th March is World Book Day and the English Department would like to run their WBD lessons on Teams that day for pupils to be able to enjoy – more details will be provided by the English team next week!)

On Wednesday, Thursday and Friday next week, work will be placed on Go4Schools for pupils, freeing up staff to help run the testing programme which will mean that all pupils can return on the following Monday, preventing some year groups from having to wait longer. I hope that parents understand and agree with the reasons behind this decision.

Full Return to School – Monday 8th March

As stated above, we are delighted to be welcoming our brilliant pupils and staff team back to school. To prepare for this, the senior leadership team have been working intensively since Monday, and we have almost finished reviewing our risk assessments and plans. There are some things we would like to try to change and improve from our last operating model, and I hope to have full details about these when I next write to you next week, but one thing we do already know is that DfE guidance on face masks has now changed and these are now strongly encouraged at all times indoors. The guidance also suggests that masks should be changed during the day and therefore we would ask for parents' support in ensuring that children attend school with appropriate masks. We understand that this guidance will be reviewed by the government at Easter.

The government have been clear that attendance at school once again becomes compulsory from Monday 8th March, and that all pupils should attend unless they are ill, self-isolating or have a shielding letter from their GP. We appreciate that some parents may be unsettled by the return following another widespread lockdown, and would ask that if you have any concerns that you share them with your child's Head of Year, so that we can work together to allay them and support your family in the most appropriate way.

I will write again next week with fuller details about how we intend to return everyone to class on Monday 8th March and the changes we propose to make this time, once those plans are finalised and risk assessments complete (and once the logistics of mass testing have been managed).

Parent Consultation Meetings – Year 9 on Thursday 4th & Friday 5th March

We know that parents will be keen to know how their children's education is progressing, and we recently held our first virtual parent consultation day for Year 11 which went extremely well. Therefore, we intend to hold further parent consultation meetings, first for Year 9 next week, followed then quickly by Year 7, Year 8 and Year 10 before the Easter break – with dates for these to follow soon.

This Year 9 consultation will be online, and parents will be able to choose appointments at times convenient to them using SchoolCloud. If you experience any problems with the booking process, please contact Miss McGivern, Head of Year 9, and she will be happy to help. Equally, if you are either unable to make either of these dates or are unable to secure appointments at suitable times Miss McGivern will help work out how to schedule something that works better for you.

Year 11 - GCSE and other qualifications in 2021

In a very busy week we of course also received yesterday the government's proposals for the process of providing teacher assessed grades to exam boards for candidates this year. This appears to be very much in line with what I had been expecting, although it does bring with it challenges for our teaching staff again. We will, of course, assess each candidate fairly, honestly, transparently and accurately, and I will be publishing details of the process we will use to arrive at those submitted grades as soon as I can once further information has been provided by the exam boards. In the meantime, I would suggest that the Current Assessment Grades we provided recently provide parents with evidence about the grade we could confidently evidence now, while the Predicted Final Grades we shared recently give an indication of likely best-case scenario, although these are not yet evidenced and depend on the quality of work students submit between now and early June. For students, the message therefore very clearly is to continue to work hard, because nothing is yet set in stone.

I hope that this bulletin provides enough initial information for families to begin to get ready for that return to KLA on Monday 8th March. If you have any further queries please contact your child's Head of Year and we will try to answer them for you. I will be back in touch next week with more information about what this return will look like for us all, and in the meantime I wish everyone a lovely weekend.



Alan Fletcher