

WOOTTON ACADEMY TRUST

Friday 26 February 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

We are looking forward to welcoming our pupils and students back to school and college.

All pupils and students will return on **Monday 15 March**. Our remote learning programme will continue until that date.

Before then, starting on **Tuesday 2 March** parents and carers of all Wootton Upper School pupils and Kimberley College students will be strongly encouraged to make appointments for their children to come into school or the college to take three Lateral Flow Device [LFD] Tests.

In making arrangements for these tests to take place before everybody returns to on site school and college our Health and Safety subcommittee has considered government advice and guidance as well as following guidance from others. Keeping everybody safe is at the centre of our planning.

We have taken a few days to consider fully different options: we have determined that by starting testing next week, earlier than many schools and colleges and, by completing all three tests before reopening it is the safest way to re-open our school and college. Whilst the number of confirmed positive cases in Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire is much lower than in January, the numbers currently are still at the level they were in early December, so there is a long way to go. *[Bedford Borough had **229** confirmed cases in the data published on December 9 and **241** in the data published yesterday].*

We are confident that if all our pupils and students take three tests over the next two weeks, along with our staff completing their home testing, we can look forward to returning to onsite education with the greatest level of confidence.

As you can imagine completing all of these LFD Tests [almost 5,000] at the school and college over the next two weeks is a logistical exercise. We have trained more than fifty members of staff to make it possible to undertake the tests over the next two weeks. Clearly, it would be impossible to complete 5,000 tests over nine days if, at the same time we had large numbers of pupils and students attending lessons in school. When lessons restart we do not want pupils and students to leave lessons to be tested and for teachers and other staff not to be available because they were needed for the tests.

We remain very, very grateful to all those parents and carers who offered their help at the end of December and beginning of January. Reluctantly our Health and Safety Team realized that asking all of our volunteers to complete the compulsory training for a programme lasting just nine days was not fair, when many would have only been able to help for one or two days. Nonetheless I want again to acknowledge my thanks.

Our current emergency provision for vulnerable children and children of key workers will continue up to and including Friday 12 March. Please note that we cannot accept any new pupils in this emergency provision while we carry out testing of our whole school and college community.

LFD testing of young people is a key government strategy in enabling the reopening of schools to all pupils and students. Government guidance is that parents /carers are strongly encouraged to give their consent for their children to take these LFD tests to minimize the risk of Covid 19 being spread. **Our school and college communities will be safest if everybody who is allowed to do so, completes them.** We would urge you to register your children for the tests, but it is voluntary.

Children, young people or adults who have had their first vaccination should take the three LFD tests. The only individuals who should not take the LFD tests are those who have tested positive for Covid 19 in the last 3 months [**since December 1st 2020**]. Before any pupil or student can complete the three tests the consent forms must be completed by **Monday 1st March 9am**. **For Wootton students this consent will be parental and for Kimberley students they may give their own consent in discussion with parents. To give consent for Wootton students please use this [link](#) and to give consent for**

Kimberley students please use this [link](#). A reminder that our privacy notice is attached and available on both the school and college websites.

Once our pupils and students have completed these three tests, future tests will be undertaken at home using home testing kits which are being delivered to schools and colleges over the next few weeks. Guidance on issuing home testing kits is that they can only be distributed to children and young people who have completed the three LFD tests in schools/colleges.

Testing will be carried out between 9am and 3pm at both Wootton Upper School for pupils in Years 9 -11 and Kimberley College for Years 12 – 13 students. You will be able to book appointments online for these tests using the links in the table below. **Bookings must be completed by noon of the day prior to day of the test.**

Some parents/carers have several children at the school and college. Where this is the case, it will be possible to book family appointments whereby all the children in the family who attend either Wootton Upper School and Kimberley College to take their LFD tests at the same time. **All family appointments will take place at Kimberley College.** The schedule of appointments for each year group is as follows:

Wootton Upper School

➤ Year 11	Tuesday 2 March	Friday 5 March	Wednesday 10 March
➤ Year 10	Wednesday 3 March	Monday 8 March	Thursday 11 March
➤ Year 9	Thursday 4 March	Tuesday 9 March	Friday 12 March.

Kimberley College

➤ Year 13	Tuesday 2 March	Friday 5 March	Wednesday 10 March
➤ Year 12	Wednesday 3 March	Monday 8 March	Thursday 11 March
➤ Family slots	Thursday 4 March	Tuesday 9 March	Friday 12 March.

We have all got used to social distancing, using hand sanitizer and wearing face coverings when shopping or at work. Please remind your child to wear a face covering and follow social distancing and hand sanitising procedures when they come into school to take their LFD tests.

When everyone returns to school and college on Monday 15 March they will be expected to wear a face covering at all times, except during their outside break and in lessons such as PE.

I would like to thank everyone for their continuing support. Many staff have gone far and beyond what could be expected of even the most dedicated individuals. Some of you have written to me to express your thanks of individual members of staff. Thank you. I would like to express the Trust's thanks to our core Health and Safety Covid Leadership Team of **Dr MacKay, Mrs McMorn** and **Mrs McMenemy** for the extraordinary work over many months. They have been incredible in keeping us all as safe as possible.

Yours sincerely



Michael Gleeson
Executive Principal
Wootton Academy Trust

Wootton Academy Trust operates:
Wootton Upper School & Arts College
Kimberley 16-19 STEM College
Registered in England and Wales
Company No. 7740758

Wootton Academy Trust
Hall End Road, Wootton
Bedford, MK43 9HT.
01234 767123
Email: wootton@wootton.beds.sch.uk
www.woottonupper.co.uk
www.kimberleycollege.co.uk