

11 December 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

Following up on the earlier letter that was sent out jointly from Furness Academy, Public Health Cumbria and Cumbria County Council with regard to mass testing our school community for COVID-19, I would like to update you with the plans so far.

There is still a great deal of logistical planning to do to carry out the testing on site and the detail for this will be provided next week when it is finalised. I have to say that, once again, I have been struck by the selflessness and willingness of a number of our school staff who immediately volunteered to help out and assist with the organisation and administration of the mass testing. Whilst we accept that it will delay the start to our term, there is no doubt that by identifying any asymptomatic cases within our school community and removing them before we start will help reduce further transmission of the virus. The potential knock-on effect will also be to reduce transmission of the virus in our wider community and hence we can play our part in keeping transmission down at a time when it is predicted to rise again in January. None of us want the 'third wave' that is being discussed in the media.

In order for the mass testing to happen, all students will be expected to work remotely from home on Monday 4, Tuesday 5 and Wednesday 6 January 2021. During those three days, a rota will be set up for all students to be invited up to school to be tested and then return home. School will reopen to all students who receive a negative test result on Thursday 7 January. Any students who test positive will have to self-isolate for 10 days from the day of their test.

Teachers will provide work for the students via Microsoft Teams and this will follow the students' normal school timetable.

To allow reasonable time for staff to prepare for the 3 days of remote teaching we will be taking Friday 18 December as an INSET day, which means that this term will finish half a day earlier than expected for students on **Thursday 17 December at 3.10pm**. I recognise that this is very late notice, especially for those of you who will now need to arrange childcare as a result, but I hope I can count on your understanding.

It has already been an incredible term and whilst it has been extremely challenging, and the challenges continue to come, it has also been incredible for the fortitude, humanity, kindness and patience that our school community has shown one another.

I will write to you again next week with the full details and practicalities of the mass testing, but in the meantime if you have an urgent question please email masstesting@furnessacademy.co.uk.

We are hugely grateful for your continued support and challenge.

Yours faithfully



Simon Laheney
Headteacher