

**4<sup>th</sup> January 2021**

## **Start of Spring Term Principal's Update**

Dear Parents & Carers,

I hope you have had a relaxing break and this email finds you well. I'd be grateful if you could take the time to read these important messages and then discuss with your children before they return to school tomorrow, **Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> January**.

### **January – current context**

I'm afraid current Covid levels mean this will be a challenging month for KAA in terms of staffing. I want to start by reassuring parents that we are **absolutely committed to keeping school fully open** and **ensuring students have six great lessons every day**. However, in the last two weeks we have had over 30 positive staff cases, and if this pattern doesn't change we can expect 5-10 teachers absent on any given day in January. That will be very hard to manage, but *we can do it with parent help and student cooperation*, which brings me to...

### **Cover work**

KAA does not use external supply teachers, and instead our own staff step in and teach each other's lessons where absence occurs. Students are used to this happening occasionally, but this month they are likely to see more of it than normal.

If / when this happens, please encourage your child to carry on with their learning as normal, even if they are being taught by a teacher they are less familiar with. The work will be the same, and their regular teacher will receive updates on how they are doing, and be back once their isolation finishes.

### **Testing**

All students in the UK need to complete an LFD test on their return to school this term. Students should go directly to their form rooms tomorrow at 8.30am to complete this.

**Parents can massively help us with this process by completing an LFD with them today at home.** That should pick up positive cases *before* they attend school tomorrow, thereby stopping infection spreading and avoiding extra work for our staff in having to manage positive cases.

If your child tests positive tomorrow morning at KAA, we will send them straight home to isolate and get a PCR test. We will email you to notify you of this, but it may be that we are unable to call individual parents before sending students home. Younger students, or those with any vulnerabilities, will of course not be sent home without parental consent.

## Masks

Updated government guidance is that students need to wear masks in lessons as well as communal areas until Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> January, when things will hopefully be more settled. KAA has resisted asking students to wear masks in lessons until now, but we have no option given the new guidelines. Latest Department of Education trials show that this measure *will help reduce spread*, so it does seem worth it to avoid more students and staff having to miss school this month.

Although most KAA students are good at wearing masks – and we are grateful for this – a number of them either forget, or decline to put them on if they can avoid it. We will therefore be reintroducing short detentions for failing to wear masks *for the next 3 weeks only*. Mask detentions will be 20 minutes after school only, and hopefully not needed too much. Please help us by emphasising to your child they must bring a face mask every day.

## Vaccination

I appreciate why parents might be hesitant about this, and I haven't encouraged it directly before, but at this point I would urge all KAA parents to consider getting their child jabbed (or second jabbed if they have had the first). We are not hosting any vaccination days at school this month, but you can get it done at a local vaccination centre by booking online. If any parent wants support with booking their child's vaccine then please email [info@kaa.org.uk](mailto:info@kaa.org.uk) and we will try to help. Children aged 12 or over are currently eligible.

The NHS are planning on offering a second vaccine day here at KAA in early February, but I can reassure parents that, as before, there will be a **rigorous consent process** required, whereby parents will need to send an email from their registered account AND complete a written consent form. We will be back in touch about this nearer the time.

## Enrichment

Given the extra teaching our healthy staff will need to do this month, we have regrettably decided to delay the start of the spring term enrichment until Monday 31<sup>st</sup> January. Students have already entered their preferences, and will be issued timetables in the coming week, so they know what enrichments to look forward to.

## Parents Events

These are critical to student progress so will continue in person in January, but we will ask parents to complete an LFD on the day before they attend and wear masks. A reminder of upcoming events is below:

Y11 Mock Results Evening – Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> January, 6pm-7pm

Y9 GCSE Options Evening – Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> January, 5pm-7pm

Y7 Parents' Evening – Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> January, 4.30pm-7.30pm

## Students Isolating

Attendance at school remains a legal requirement and we expect all students to be at school this month. However, in the event your child has to isolate due to Covid, they can access their lessons via Google

Classroom – if they are well enough they should follow these from home. If an individual lesson is not posted on Google Classroom for any reason, your child should complete other work related to the topic and drop their teacher a short email requesting the lesson.

### **Exemption from testing or mask wearing**

Both testing and wearing masks are now *very standard public health measures* and I would *strongly request that parents don't opt out of them*, as it will make your own children and their classmates less safe.

However, if your child has a legitimate health reason then you can of course be exempt from masks, and agreement to testing is - ultimately - a parental preference.

If you want your child added to the official exemption for masks, please email [info@kaa.org.uk](mailto:info@kaa.org.uk) with the medical reason as to why. You don't need to re-email if you have done this previously.

To opt out of testing please fill in this short form: <https://forms.gle/qCHrdj4BMstkEC3m9>. If you have done this previously there is no need to repeat the process. If you have previously opted out but would now like to opt back in, just email [info@kaa.org.uk](mailto:info@kaa.org.uk). **Please note that any new requests to opt-out must be received by 5 pm today.**

I'll finish by repeating what I said at the start – we are committed to keeping KAA fully open and continuing to provide students with an excellent education this month, notwithstanding the staffing pressures we are facing. All the help and support you can give us with that would be hugely welcome.

Best wishes,



**David Benson**  
**Principal**