



Our Ref: FCG/SJM

3 March 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

Re-opening Somercotes Academy for all pupils from 8 March 2021

Following the most recent government guidance, outlining that all pupils must return to school from 8 March 2021, I wanted to write to you to explain our plans to bring all students back into the Academy and to make you aware of some of the measures that will be in place from March in order to ensure the safety of staff and students.

Student Return Dates

Thank you to parents who have been able to book their children in for lateral flow tests prior to the return of the Academy. This tremendous effort means that I am delighted to be able to say that we will open for all students from 8 March. All children should attend, as normal, from Monday 8 March 2021.

Face-coverings in the Academy

It is now the government's recommendation that staff and students wear a suitable face covering when on school transport, when entering and leaving the Academy, when in corridors and other communal areas where social distancing cannot easily be observed and in classrooms. Please provide your child with a suitable face covering and explain to them that they will be required to wear them throughout the day. If you believe that your child is exempt from wearing a face-covering and you have not previously made us aware, please contact the Academy.

Lateral Flow Testing

It is recommended that all students returning to school should be offered a series of three lateral flow tests spaced 3 to 5 days apart. The first test should be carried out before the child enters a classroom. In order to facilitate a smooth return to learning, we have offered testing at the Academy on Thursday 4 and Friday 5 March. If you would like your child to take part in this, please contact the Academy as soon as possible by telephone on 01507 353459 or email at enquiries@somercotesacademy.co.uk in order to arrange an appointment. Testing will also be available on Monday 8 March and for these students there will a slight delay to accessing lessons. All students who will be tested require parental consent, this can be completed using the form on the Academy website or on paper in person at the Academy reception. Testing is not compulsory but is highly recommended. Following the completion of three tests under supervision in the Academy, students will be issued with testing kits to enable testing to continue at home. These will be provided with full instructions.

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The Academy Day

As most students travel by bus, the start and finish times of the Academy day will remain unchanged. Once students have arrived on site, they will be grouped into their year group bubbles and staggered timings will be in place during the Academy day, including at break and lunch. Our broad and balanced curriculum will remain in place though movement around the site will be minimised.

Travel

Students are asked to maintain social distancing when making their way to and from Academy. Students must not congregate in groups outside the Academy or elsewhere. If you are dropping your child off and picking them up from the Academy site, please wait in your vehicle at the front of the Academy. Students who are travelling by car or walking, should arrive at the Academy for 8.50 for the start of the day. If your child is going to be late, please ring the Academy in order to make arrangement for their arrival.

Academy transport is running as usual from 8 March, however, the council continues to encourage students not to use transport unless necessary. Students who travel by bus to and from the Academy, should, where possible, sit only with members of their own year group. At the end of the Academy day, students will be sat on the buses in year groups. All students travelling by bus or local authority taxi must wear a face-covering unless they are exempt.

Student Safety

As they did in September, students will return to the site in year group “bubbles”, situated in defined areas and with staggered lunch and breaks. Every effort will be made to minimise contact between these bubbles during the day.

Social-distancing will be in place as much as possible and enhanced hygiene practices will be in place. Students will be encouraged to wash their hands and to use hand sanitiser regularly throughout the day. All rooms used by staff and students will be deep cleaned daily. This will include desks, chairs, door handles, light switches etc. Hand sanitiser units are installed across the site and additional sinks for handwashing have been installed in the playground in preparation for students’ returning.

To minimise contact between “bubbles”, students will spend as much time outside as possible. Each group will be allocated their own outside area. Can we kindly request that your child has a suitable coat or jacket to be worn in case of poor weather. Each group of students will be allocated toilet facilities to use. They will be required to queue two metres apart and numbers will be controlled. There will be frequent cleaning of all facilities throughout the day.



All students must adhere to the strict guidelines in place to maintain the safety of everyone on site. Full guidance will be given to all students in remote assemblies prior to their return and on site on their return to the Academy. Normal behaviour rewards and sanctions will be implemented. All students must bring their own basic equipment, including stationery and must not lend any items to others. Each student should bring a school bag, coat, a pen, pencil, ruler and rubber, a drinks bottle and a packed lunch if required.

Food Provision

Aspens, our caterer will provide a selection of snacks at breaktimes which students will be able to order in advance each morning. At lunchtime, there will be a “Grab and Go” menu of hot and cold food, including a choice of a set hot meal. Where possible, to maintain the safety of all students and staff please can I ask that students’ accounts are topped up using ParentPay rather than the onsite machine. Students can of course bring their own packed lunch if they wish. All students will need to bring a filled water bottle to keep hydrated throughout the day. Unfortunately, we will not be able to offer a breakfast service at this time.

Uniform

In line with government guidance, students are required to wear their normal Somercotes Academy uniform. Students must bring their Academy PE kits on days where they have PE on their timetables. Students may also wear a plain black jumper under their blazer and additional layers can be worn under the Academy uniform on cold days. If you have any difficulties regarding Academy uniform, please speak to your child’s Head of House.

Attendance

Government guidelines have made it clear that all students are expected to return on 8 March 2021 unless they have received a shielding letter in their own name. If you have any concerns about your child’s return to the Academy or would like to speak to a pastoral manager, please call the Academy on 01507 353459.

Illness

If your child is due to come in to the Academy but is unwell or unable to attend for any reason, please let the Academy know by 9.00am by ringing 01507 353459. If your child becomes unwell during the Academy day they will be supported by the medical assistant who will be wearing suitable PPE (Personal Protective Equipment). If necessary, your child’s temperature will be taken and they may be isolated until you are able to collect them. Any room used for this purpose will then be deep cleaned. Please ensure that the Academy is aware of any changes to emergency contact details at this time.

If your child shows any symptoms of Covid-19 (a new, continuous cough, raised temperature, a loss or change to taste or smell) you should not send your child to the

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Academy and should follow the Government guidelines on self-isolating and testing. Please let the Academy know any test results as soon as possible. If someone in your household has Covid-19 symptoms, the household should self-isolate and the member of the household should get a test. Students should not return to the Academy until the results of this test are known. If the household member's test is negative, the student can stop self-isolating and return to the Academy. If the household member's test is positive, the student should continue self-isolating for the full 10 days from when the member of their household first had symptoms. The same applies if someone with whom the pupil has had close contact tests positive or shows symptoms. If you are unsure whether your child should attend the Academy because of a Covid-19 related issue, please telephone the Academy for clarification before sending your child in.

Communication

Parents will not be allowed into the Academy except by appointment, communication will be via email or telephone. If you do need to come onto the Academy site, please report to reception with no additional people (unless absolutely necessary) and follow social-distancing rules.

As I am sure that you will understand, the safety of staff and students remains my priority. It is of paramount importance that all of the above measures are followed to ensure as safe an environment as possible for all students and staff. We look forward to welcoming all staff and students back to the Academy. Please be reassured that we will endeavour to ensure that every student in given the support, guidance and opportunities they need in order to achieve their full potential.

Yours faithfully

Mrs F Green
Principal