

Thursday 31st December 2020

RETURN TO SCHOOLING SPRING TERM 2021 & TESTING

Dear Parents/ Carers

You will be aware that the Department for Education (DfE) is advising schools to delay the return in January of secondary age pupils so that plans for mass COVID testing can be put in place in schools.

The Esteem Trust have decided that it will be best for our academies to **open as normal, for all our pupils**. As the DfE guidance still requires vulnerable pupils and children of key workers to attend school from the start of term, this would mean that all Esteem academies would open to significant numbers of pupils next week, in any event.

We share the view of the trust that the disruption that would be caused to pupils and their families by any changes to the normal attendance arrangements would outweigh any discernible benefits from having fewer pupils in schools for a one-week period.

Pupils will therefore still return to schooling for the start of the Spring Term on **Tuesday 5th January 2021**. To allow us to implement plans around testing and maintain safety for the coming term, staff will have an additional INSET day as already shared on Monday 4th January 2021.

Amongst the new measures in place will be the use of Lateral Flow Device testing in school for all staff and pupils. I will be in touch with how this will be undertaken, and all the associated consent information will be sought beforehand. I would be very grateful for a swift return of this once we send the forms out.

In the meantime, may I wish you all a Happy New Year.

Yours sincerely



Mr C Marshall, Acting Head Teacher