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1 January 2021

COVID-19 Update

Assalamu alaikum

Dear parent/guardian

I pray that you and your family are well inshaAllah.

I am writing to you to inform you of the Academy's position after the announcements made by the Government on 30 December in light of the increasing infection rates from COVID-19.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/education-secretary-sets-out-school-contingency-plans-for-england>

On Monday 4 January, pupils in Years 5 and 6 will return to the Academy as they have done from the start of the academic year in September. They will be receiving their normal lessons and curriculum and the restrictions and mitigations put in place to keep them safe during the pandemic remain in place.

Pupils in Year 7 to Year 11 (those of secondary age) will not return unless you as their parents/carers are a critical worker or the pupil is deemed vulnerable and you still wish to send your child into school. The definition and criteria for this can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-COVID-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision>

Could you please inform the school, on our COVID email below, as soon as possible, should you be deemed as a critical worker, outlining your role with ID provided, and what days you need provision:

covid@excellencegirlsacademy.co.uk

All pupils in Year 7 to Year 11 will be taught remotely until their return. Year 11 will return to school from Monday 11 January insha'Allah. We are consulting with Public Health England regarding the earliest date that other year groups may return to school, but this should be no later than Monday 18 January. Their timetable of lessons will be shared through Microsoft Teams and shared with parents through email and the website insha'Allah.

Information about online learning:

- We will provide daily Teams meetings for each subject class, as per the school timetable. The teacher will deliver teaching and provide support for assigned tasks and activities.
- Activities related to the teaching sessions will be uploaded to the Teams 'Assignments' area, in the 'Files' area or in Outlook, in order for children to practice the new skills and knowledge shared by the class teacher each day.
- We will remain committed to teaching a broad and balanced curriculum.
- High quality teaching will be provided to ensure that new learning continues and that children continue to make progress.

- All children will be expected to access and engage in the daily activities to ensure that they continue to make progress.
- If access to enough laptops/computers/tablets is an issue, please inform the head teacher as soon as possible so that alternative options can be arranged, which may include physical exercise books, activity packs and textbooks (where appropriate).
- We strongly advise that students use overhead headphones rather than in-ear headphones for their comfort, given the extended period of time in which they will be used.
- Although we will not be asking for students to enable their video camera whilst in online-lessons, they will need to have an enabled microphone (either within the headphones or the laptop/PC being used) so they can communicate with the teacher.
- Students may also be requested to send photos of any work they complete on paper or in books to their teacher for marking and feedback. The easiest way to do this is to use the Outlook or Teams app on the same phone used to take the photo so that it can be attached by clicking upload from this device.

We have created the following guidelines to ensure that these sessions run as smoothly as possible. We ask that you read them carefully.

Virtual lesson guidelines

- School rules apply to all school related activities including those that are online.
- Though parents and guardians are not required to sit in on the teaching session with your child, it would be appreciated if you could be within earshot in order to assist with any technical issues that arise.
- Pupils must be in a communal living area. Pupils must not be in their bedrooms.
- Pupils will be asked to mute/unmute their microphones as and when required, for instance when there is noise in the background or when called on to answer a question, to ensure the smooth management of sessions.
- Children should not in any circumstances capture or use video of any staff or other students. They should not share video of themselves with other students during lessons, unless asked to do so for a particular purpose by a member of staff.
- Staff will record all live lessons for safeguarding purposes, which will be stored in line with GDPR guidelines.
- Children will need to have the appropriate equipment ready for the session (paper, pencil, pen and ruler).

By taking part in remote learning, you confirm your understanding that:

- If a member of staff has any safeguarding concerns, they will report these to the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead/Deputy Designated Lead.
- If you have any safeguarding concerns regarding an incident during a live lesson, you should discuss these with the member of staff. If it is not appropriate to do so, please contact the Headteacher (Designated Safeguarding Lead) at safe@excellencegirlsacademy.co.uk.

Reporting an absence

Please continue to inform the school immediately of any COVID-19 related absence from live lessons. This could be due to the following reasons:

- Your child or a member of your household/bubble is displaying symptoms
- Your child or a member of your household /bubble has been tested for COVID-19 and you are awaiting results
- Your child or a member of your household /bubble has been contacted by the Government Track and Trace team and has been instructed to self-isolate

If your child is unable to attend a lesson online due to a COVID-19 related absence or any other non-COVID-19 reason, please contact the school at the earliest opportunity on 01782 390807 or 07434 547050.

Mass testing:

You may be aware of the Government's initiative to test all secondary age pupils. I will be writing to you with further information regarding how the Academy is going to implement this and to gain your consent for your child to be tested.

The school will also be in touch regarding reopening the school for years 7 to 10 and will keep you updated through text message and/or email. Updates and guidance will also continue to be published on our website.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the school.

Please kindly complete the form attached in the email with the letter, and return to school via email as soon as possible, to provide your consent for your child to carry out learning online through Microsoft Teams.

Jazakallah khair for your continued support and cooperation and we look forward to seeing all students back in school as soon as possible. As this pandemic continues to disrupt our lives and students' education, it is vital that we all play our part in controlling the virus so that we can return to some form of normality as quickly as possible. We urge everyone to please follow the current government advice around Tier 4 restrictions; stay home to save lives.

May Allah protect and guide us all through these tough times. Ameen.

Yours sincerely

Samia Haroon

**Samia Haroon
Headteacher**