



Alameda Middle School

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COVID-19 Update:

Rapid testing for schools and colleges returning after the winter break

Return in January 2021

18th December 2020

Dear parents and carers,

You may be aware of the guidance for [schools](#) published last night by the DfE.

Yesterday, the government confirmed that all **secondary schools** and colleges in England will be able to offer staff and students an extra round of free coronavirus testing from the first week of January. The aim of this is to help deliver the national priority of keeping as many students and teachers as possible in school and college while fighting the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19).

The government announced a three-strand approach to managing transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19):

1. Supporting schools to set a regular testing programme to test staff and the close contacts of staff and students who test positive for the virus.
2. Reducing the number of children in secondary schools and colleges for the first full week of January, with vulnerable children, children of critical workers and those in exam cohorts, receiving face to face education, with others learning remotely.
3. Offering secondary schools and colleges help, support and facilities to test as many pupils as possible as they resume face-to-face education.

As a middle school, some of this is slightly unclear and we have sought to gain clarification on how we should interpret this. As such, I must apologise for the fact that I **will need to clarify our approach in January**.

Years 7 and 8 Remote learning in the First Week back

To enable us to follow this guidance, it is our plan for years 7 and 8 to stay at home and access remote learning from Tuesday 5th January to Friday 8th January, returning to school on Monday 11th January. I am pleased that we have been able to establish a clear plan for this.

You will receive a separate letter in January about remote learning and how this will be organised via Google Classroom.

Critical workers

Vulnerable pupils and children of critical workers will still attend school. If you believe you are a critical worker please indicate this on our **EduLink survey**. They will stay in their normal class bubble. A definition of "critical worker" is available on EduLink.

Testing

Lateral flow testing will be provided. It is not mandatory and pupils will still be allowed into school without taking the test. Children have two tests, the second three days after the first.

Parents of children in Years 7 and 8 will receive a **request for consent for your child to have the test via EduLink**. We ask that you respond to this and confirm whether (or not) you give your consent to your child having lateral flow COVID-19 tests at school.

Testing will start with the critical worker and vulnerable pupils group.

During the week from Tuesday 5th to Friday 8th January, the rest of year 7 and 8 will be invited into school to take a test and then a follow up test three days later. Details of times for this will be sent to you and we will be asking that pupils attend at specific times so that we can organise testing within class bubbles. We ask for your support with this.

You are able to respond via **EduLink to request support with transport**.

More information about asymptomatic testing can be found in the guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-asymptomatic-testing-in-schools-and-colleges>

Timing and further information

We are still seeking clarification on testing for years 5 and 6 and are currently planning for pupils in these year groups to still be able to attend school from 5th January. I will write to confirm the details further on the 4th of January. I am sorry not to be able to confirm any sooner than this.

I can only ask that you understand the timing of this letter. The information from the DfE only came out at 6.25 pm yesterday allowing us very little time to plan on the last day of term, which you will understand is always a busy day anyway. We are still seeking clarification on several points and will update you further on 4th January.

You will already be aware of my previous COVID-19 updates, sent out earlier this week, regarding face coverings for staff and pupils in years 7 and 8 and contact tracing over the Christmas holiday. It can be found here <http://www.alamedamiddleschool.org.uk/attachments/download.asp?file=4236&type=pdf>
<http://www.alamedamiddleschool.org.uk/attachments/download.asp?file=4232&type=pdf>

Further information

I am sure you will have lots of questions and we will try to provide answers once more information is provided to us. Updates will follow in January.

And finally

What a way to end the term! I'm pleased that while I have been writing this, the pupils have been enjoying the virtual staff pantomime and other end of term treats. That's the important thing! I hope that even with the restrictions in place, you can enjoy the holiday.

Thank you for your support.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read 'M Warner', with a stylized, cursive script.

Miss M Warner

Headteacher