

22 January 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

As we end another week of lockdown and partial school opening, I hope that you are managing to stay safe and coping with all the challenges our current circumstances are presenting us with.

This has been a busy week educationally with twists and turns in the Covid-19 testing world as well as finally receiving some indication of what may replace the examination system for students this summer.

Firstly, Covid-19 lateral flow testing. Despite the stories in the media, lateral flow testing of secondary staff is continuing but increasing from once to twice a week. Secondary aged students will be tested twice (3 to 5 days apart) upon their return to their academy (or already if they are accessing face to face learning as a child of a key worker or a vulnerable student) assuming parental consent has been received ([click to give CONSENT](#)). In line with government directives, after this initial, optional testing, they will not receive any further tests. The option to have a daily test for 7 days if identified as a contact of someone who had tested positive for Covid-19, allowing them to continue to come to school rather than observe a 10-day period of self-isolation has now been removed for all staff and students. The link here was updated yesterday to reflect this change: [What parents and carers need to know about early years providers, schools and colleges - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

And so, to the proposed plans for examinations this year. This document has caused some dismay from all stakeholders, with an apparent exam paper to be issued for teachers to use to enable them to provide an assessment of what grade they think a student should get. This has created a sense of one exam system being replaced with another exam system. Many questions remain unanswered in the consultation paper, including;

- what content will be covered in each subject paper (will it be the whole of the original syllabus, or parts? If parts, which parts?)
- will all subjects have these exam papers?
- how will the discrepancy in learning time from student to student be addressed both in the same academy and to reflect regional differences?

The consultation is open to all; parents, students and staff and I would strongly urge you to submit a response. Parents with children who are not currently in an exam year have as much of an interest as those who do, as precedents set this year, may well be used to make decisions in coming years, depending on how our current circumstances evolve. The consultation document can be found [here](#). Please do take the time to look at it and to respond.

As we continue to manage partial opening alongside virtual learning, I would ask that you ensure that you do not visit any of our sites unless you have made a prior appointment to do so. This is to protect our staff and those students who are still accessing provision. All sites are running on reduced staffing and as such there are no "spare" staff to deal with enquiries as would normally have been the case.

- If you need to contact our academies with a general query, please do so using the appropriate admin email address
- If you wish to report a student absence (even when they are learning virtually at home), please telephone the academy in question and select the appropriate option. This will then help us to monitor where a student is not engaging through ill health as opposed to some other issue which we would need to investigate on the grounds of safeguarding
- If you have a technical question about Microsoft Teams, including password issues (NOT subject content or help with work set) please email the dedicated support address:

microsoftteamsparentsupport@isleeducationtrust-iet.co.uk

During lockdown and remote learning, there have been various offers made by businesses and organisations to provide free resources for parents and children. Below is information from North Lincolnshire Libraries regarding free access to books.

North Lincolnshire Libraries have recently extended the range of stock available on Borrowbox, an e-book and e-audio book service, and an exciting addition to libraries' existing on-line offer.

- *Library members can borrow 10 titles at any time, for 21 days, for free.*
- *North Lincolnshire Libraries have a large range of high-quality online resources for study and/or reading for pleasure at home.*
- *Please explore the link below:*
- [North Lincolnshire Libraries online resources](#)

All resource can be accessed free with North Lincolnshire Library membership.

- *Membership can easily be obtained by e-mailing library.enquiries@northlincs.gov.uk*

You will be enrolled remotely and your card number will be sent by email, which will give you immediate access to all our online resources.

- *During National Lockdown our community hubs are offering a limited service, more information can be found here:*

[Ready Reads \(click and collect service\)](#)

Ready Reads bags of books can be ordered by filling in this online form:
[North Lincolnshire Libraries Ready Reads We Select, You Collect \(office.com\)](https://www.northlincolnshire.gov.uk/libraries/ready-reads-we-select-you-collect-office-com)

Similarly, Oak Academy have this week launched a free book to read online as well as conversations with the author. To begin, Jacqueline Wilson can be watched talking about her book Tracy Beaker as well as free access to the novel using this link:

<https://library.thenational.academy/>

Finally, for those families in receipt of Free School Meals, I am pleased to confirm that vouchers for this week have been ordered and are available for families to redeem. A weekly voucher will be made available up to and including the week beginning 8 February 2021, when the current government scheme will end. The Local Authority have confirmed that at this point, they will be providing, direct to families, a voucher to cover the half term break. The vast majority of these vouchers will be posted out from North Lincolnshire Council to home addresses shortly, or, if a home visit is planned, they may be delivered personally.

As ever, I thank you for your continued support in these difficult times.

Take care and keep safe



S J Sprack
CEO Isle Education Trust