

TLA / GPA

25th August 2021

Dear Parent/Carer,

I trust that you have had an enjoyable summer break and that all our families have had a chance to rest and recharge after such an extraordinary year. I should like to extend a particularly warm welcome to parents of our new Year 7 students as they prepare to become part of the Alec Hunter community. It is very much our intention to make this year feel as normal as possible for everyone. Certain measures will still be in place to keep everyone safe, of course, and I will say more about that in a moment, but we are looking forward to focusing on what we do best, providing great teaching and learning for our young people.

Covid Testing and Start of Term

Knowing that, historically, instructions from the Government regarding Covid have often been made with very little notice to schools, we have been waiting to see if there were any last-minute changes to guidance before communicating with you about our plans for the start of term. We feel reasonably confident that it is now appropriate for us to do so, but we will let you know if anything has to be adjusted.

The Government has advised secondary schools to conduct two on-site lateral flow tests for all students at the start of term. However, Essex County Council has given approval for schools to take a more flexible approach to this, recognising that most students are now very familiar with self-testing. With this in mind, **only new Year 7 students will need to take two tests on site. Students in all other year groups will be asked to undertake one lateral flow test at home, 3-5 days before returning to school, and will then take one further test in our on-site testing facility.**

Testing around 1000 young people, many of them twice, is a huge operation and so schools have been permitted by the Government to stagger the start of term for different year groups in order to allow this to happen. Our schedule will therefore be as follows:

Year 7:

All our new Year 7 students should come into school on **Friday 3rd September** to take their first supervised lateral flow test. Parents will need to give their consent for this, and we have two forms in place, one to provide consent and one to advise us that consent is not given. It is important that you complete **one** of the two forms by **9.00am on Wednesday 1st September**. The Privacy Notice is attached separately, and the forms can be accessed via the links below. Please ensure you complete the correct form:

Form to provide consent:

<https://forms.office.com/r/fehsW8skw2>

Form to advise that consent is not given:

<https://forms.office.com/r/Q768K7pJvg>

If you **do not** give consent, your child **will not** need to come into school on Friday 3rd September. If you complete the wrong form, or wish to change your mind, please email covid19@alechunter.com.

Each tutor group will have an allocated time slot and after completing the test, students will be able to return home. Students do not need to wear school uniform on this day. Times are:

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t: 01376 321813 f: 01376 326839 e: admin@alechunter.com w: www.alechunter.com

09:00 am	7H		11:30 am	7E
09:30 am	7U		12:00 pm	7R
10:00 am	7N		12:30 pm	7A
11:00 am	7T		1:45pm	7L

On **Monday 6th September**, all Year 7 students will attend their Induction Day, which sadly had to be cancelled in the Summer Term. They should arrive at school for an 8:40am start, wearing their Alec Hunter uniform, and will be guided through a series of activities to help them acclimatise to their new school. This will include some time with their form tutor, who will issue their timetables and go through some key information, so that they can go straight into lessons on the following day. On **Tuesday 7th September**, they will again come to school in Alec Hunter uniform and will follow a normal timetabled day, but will be withdrawn from lessons at a specified time, to undertake their second on-site lateral flow test.

Year 8 and Year 11:

Students in these year groups will need to perform a lateral flow test at home **between Wednesday 1st and Friday 3rd September**, and record the result on Test Register. They will then need to attend school on **Monday 6th September**, at the time specified below, to undertake their on-site lateral flow test. They do not need to wear school uniform on this day, and they will return home straight after completing the test.

Time	Tutor Group		Time	Tutor Group
08:50 am	8H		12:10 pm	11H
09:10 am	8U		12:30 pm	11U
09:30 am	8N		12:50 pm	11N
09:50 am	8T		1:10pm	Lunch
10:10 am	8E		1:50pm	11T
10:50 am	8R		2:10pm	11E
11:10 am	8A		2:30pm	11R
11:30 am	8L			

On **Tuesday 7th September**, students in these year groups will come into school in full uniform, for an 8:40am tutorial, where they will be issued with their timetable and given some key information and reminders by their form tutor. From Period 2 onwards, they will follow a normal timetable.

Year 10:

Students in this year group will need to perform a lateral flow test at home **between Thursday 2nd and Saturday 4th September**, and record the result on Test Register. They will then need to attend school on **Tuesday 7th September**, at the time specified below, to undertake their on-site lateral flow test. They do not need to wear school uniform on this day, and they will return home straight after completing the test.

12:10 pm	10H		1:50pm	10T
12:30 pm	10U		2:10pm	10E
12:50 pm	10N		2:30pm	10R
			2:50pm	10A

On **Wednesday 8th September**, students in this year group will come into school in full uniform, for an 8:40am tutorial, where they will be issued with their timetable and given some key information and reminders by their form tutor. From Period 2 onwards, they will follow a normal timetable.

Year 9:

Students in this year group will need to perform a lateral flow test at home **between Friday 3rd and Sunday 5th September**, and record the result on Test Register. They will then need to attend school on **Wednesday 8th September**, in full uniform, at the time specified below, to undertake their on-site lateral flow test. After taking their test, they will have a one-hour tutorial with their form tutor, where they will be issued with their timetable and given some key information and reminders. They will then follow a normal timetable for the rest of the day.

08:40 am	9T		09:50 am	9H
08:55 am	9E		10:10 am	9U
09:10 am	9R		10:30 am	9N
09:30 am	9A			

Please note that students must not eat or drink for the 30 minutes prior to taking the lateral flow test. We have previously requested consent from parents of students in Years 8-11 and this still stands but if you wish to change your consent, please let us know by emailing covid19@alechunter.com.

No child will be pressured into taking a test, this is a matter of personal choice, however, these measures are promoted as being a way of reducing the risk of transmission of the virus as we all return to the school buildings together, and we appreciate your support.

Covid Measures

It remains difficult to predict the course that the virus will take over coming months, or the steps that schools will be required to take to control it. At this point, as I said above, we are seeking to make life at Alec Hunter feel as normal as possible, which means that we have made the following adjustments to our arrangements from last year:

- Face coverings are optional in all areas; students and staff may choose to wear them if they wish but there is no obligation to do so
- No year group bubbles are required, so students may mix in all areas of the school
- Staggered timings of the school day, and separate break/lunch times, will cease
- No contact tracing to be undertaken by the school in the event of a positive case
- Students identified as a close contact, and staff who are double-jabbed, will no longer be required to self-isolate but will instead be advised to take a PCR test as soon as possible
- A full programme of extra-curricular activities can go ahead, as can trips, subject to travel restrictions abroad

However, there will still be some safety precautions in place, such as:

- General good hygiene to be promoted – hand sanitiser will continue to be available in all classrooms and enhanced cleaning regimes will be maintained
- Ventilation in all spaces remains a priority
- Anyone showing symptoms of coronavirus should stay at home and schools have the right to send home anyone with identified symptoms
- Anyone testing positive via a lateral flow or PCR test should stay at home

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We will follow PHE advice in the case of an outbreak in school, and in those circumstances, it is likely that some or all of our Covid measures from last year may need to be reintroduced in line with our risk assessment. Whilst we very much hope it may not be required, we will maintain our capability to switch to a remote learning model at short notice if necessary, using Microsoft Teams. However, I am approaching this year with great optimism that the elements of life at Alec Hunter that we have missed so much will be able to return and that all our young people will flourish in a school environment that feels more familiar.

I will be communicating again before term begins, with some further essential information, but for now, I hope that this gives you the opportunity to prepare for the beginning of term. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us and I trust that you will enjoy the remainder of the holidays.

Yours sincerely,



Mr T. Lawn
Headteacher