

Parent Bulletin

Week commencing Monday 1 March 2021 – Week 2

Dear Parents and Carers

This has been a week for announcements! First, we heard the Prime Minister issue the welcome news of the government's proposed '**road map**' out of lockdown. It is hard to strike the balance between the urge to return to some sort of recognisable normality as soon as possible, and an understandable caution that opening too soon might bring about a further wave of disease, hospitalisation and death. We all hope that the government's plan strikes the right balance.

We have also heard announcements about **catch-up funding** (possibly to include tutoring and summer schools) and, just yesterday, assessments to replace examinations. I will leave catch-up arrangements for another time.

In terms of **reopening schools**, I wrote to you yesterday to communicate the way in which this will happen at Lord Lawson. We are following closely the guidance from the Department for Education (DfE), and we are working with other Gateshead secondary schools. I will not repeat all the information given in my letter, but urge you to refer to that. In brief, the plan is as follows. All students will come into the academy at the usual start time, 8:45am. They should enter by the same doors as they used in the autumn term.

Monday 8 March:	students in years 11 and 13
Tuesday 9 March:	students in years 10 and 12
Wednesday 10 March:	students in year 7
Thursday 11 March:	students in year 9
Friday 12 March:	students in year 8

The reason for the staggered start is, as the DfE states, so that testing can be done as students are brought back into the academy. By the end of the week, all students will be back in their lessons. We also believe that a staggered start is important, so that each year group can be welcomed back and brought back into the **culture of achievement and high expectations** that we are working so hard to create in the academy. We need time with each year group to explain our new room changes that minimise class movement in corridors. We very much need your support as students return to school. I have written about creating our culture together later in this bulletin.

We will be offering **three COVID-19 tests to students as they return** to the academy. These rapid-result lateral flow tests are important, in order to detect students (and staff) who may be asymptomatic carriers of coronavirus. By detecting and isolating any cases of coronavirus, we can maintain the safety of your children and our community. We intend to start the testing programme even before students return to lessons. It is **important that you give your consent** for your child to be tested. As part of the testing process, we will be teaching students to administer the tests themselves. After the initial three tests, at 3 - 5 day intervals, students will be given two tests a week to carry out at home.

The third announcement this week has been around **grades for students in years 11 and 13**. These grades include GCSEs, A levels, BTECs, Cambridge Nationals and OCR Nationals. Later in this bulletin you will find an infographic from Ofqual, the examinations regulator. This includes most of the necessary information in one compact form. The main points to note for now are that teachers will continue teaching new content and will combine this with a range of assessments for students, so that we can get the fullest and fairest picture of the knowledge and understanding of our students. Please note that the dates of results days have been brought forward, to 10 and 12 August. If you would like to read the full guidance, please follow this link to the [Ofqual summary and documents](#). We will be in touch in subsequent weeks to explain how we will assess students in years 11 and 13.

The weeks that we have just experienced together have been very challenging. The weeks that lie ahead will be different, and possibly just as difficult, as students and families adjust to school routines again. But I believe that we can work through them together, retaining the best of remote education and combining it with the best of school.

With all best wishes,

Yours faithfully

Mr A T Fowler
Principal

Our shared culture – and how you can help

Our shared culture is that we are working very hard together to improve Lord Lawson of Beamish Academy, so that we offer the best possible education to your children. Our vision is that **together we grow, learn and succeed**, and this shapes everything we do in the academy.

Based on our **shared values of trust, respect, courage and ambition**, teachers and support staff work every day with students and with you, their parents and carers, to improve the life chances of your children. We sincerely believe that what happens at school matters a great deal for the future of every student. The best gift any parent can give their child is an education that opens doors for them in the future. We are partners together in creating this opportunity.

In creating this culture of learning, we value effort, kindness, cooperation and perseverance. We encourage our students to recognise and develop their talents, sticking at things until they succeed.

We know that parents and carers have worked hard in difficult circumstances during lockdown, helping our students learn as well as possible. But you know too that children learn best when they can also interact with their teachers, who can support and lead them to a better understanding of their work.

As we return from lockdown, our time together in school has never been more important. It is vital that we work together – school, students, parents – to make the best of every minute of learning time.

You can support us and your child in so many ways; for example:

- by speaking with your children every day about their work and progress at school,
- by helping them prepare each evening the things they need for school next day, including their uniform,
- by making sure they have a quiet place to do their homework, and encouraging them to complete it,
- by keeping in touch with your child's teachers, tutor and house block,
- and by supporting the climate for learning that we are creating.

This culture of learning that we are creating together will transform your child's future.

Mr Fowler

Face Coverings

As students return, from 8 March, they will need to get used to **wearing face coverings indoors**, in lessons as well as in corridors. This is a temporary extra safety measure, introduced by the government and in place until Easter. Please make sure that your child is equipped with suitable face coverings.

Wearing a face covering for long periods feels unfamiliar at first. Some of our students are already preparing themselves for this by practising wearing a face covering for an hour or more, at home or at school. If you wish, you might encourage your child to do the same, and reassure them that many people are already wearing face coverings indoors, in this country and elsewhere in the world, to protect one another.

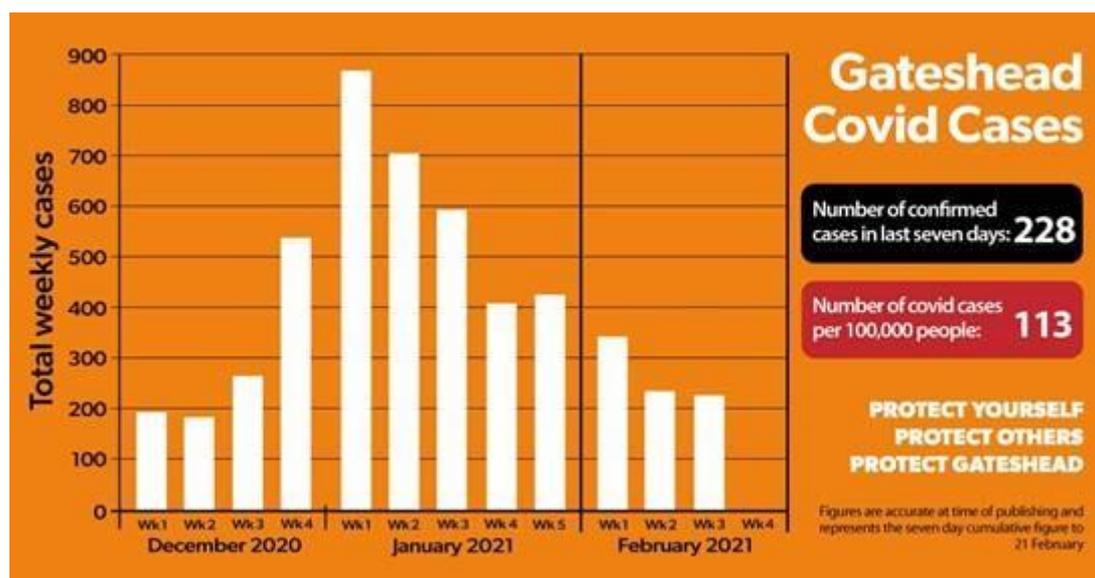
If your child is medically exempt from wearing a face covering – for example, because they have severe asthma – you should contact your child’s house block. You may need to provide evidence, on request. Students who are medically exempt from wearing face coverings wear a yellow lanyard instead, so that they are not continually stopped by members of staff.

Students will not have to wear face coverings when outside during break and lunchtime, or when eating in the cafeteria.

It is not recommended to wear the same face covering all day, so students should bring two face coverings to school each day. We have a supply of washable, reusable face coverings available at Reception, costing £1 each. If you wish your child to buy face coverings, please make sure they have enough money available on their Parentpay account – in other words, on their ‘finger’.

Mr Fowler

Latest figures from Gateshead Public Health



Uniform

Now that we know the arrangements for the return of all students to the classroom, it is time to check that all uniform is still in order and ready to be worn correctly from the day the students return.

We have the same uniform as previously but we are conscious that in returning to school we must have and maintain high standards right from the start.

There are some areas of uniform that have, in the past, been an issue for students returning to school and we are keen to avoid this distraction during this particularly challenging time.

We will be continuing to ask students to attend school with their full uniform on most days of the week and with PE kit on *only* when they have a timetabled PE lesson that day.

Some key issues you could check at this time would be:

1. Shoes - Do shoes still fit? It will have been up to 10 weeks since most students have worn their school shoes. We suggest that the first time of trying the shoes on should not be at 8.00am of the first day back to school. Check the shoes today and replace as necessary. As an academy we encourage parents to keep choices around shoes simple. Most major supermarkets stock sensible school shoes. Our uniform policy makes it clear exactly what we require.
2. Clothing - Do trousers/skirts/shirts still fit? Students have had more time to grow over the last lockdown than they usually do over a summer holiday, and we know how much and how quickly children can grow. Standard uniform items such as tailored trousers and shirts are again widely available in most major supermarkets. Specialist items such as skirts and blazers can be purchased from our school uniform suppliers: The School Outfit/Little Gems. Please note however that they have recently moved premises to Crowther Industrial Estate and no longer have a shop in The Galleries. Click and collect is available from Little Gems and they can be contacted at: theschooloutfit@btconnect.com or by telephone on: 0191 416 8889. If you choose to order on line and use the click and collect facility, then you can collect from Little Gems or arrange for your click and collect order to be delivered to the academy for collection during the week of Monday 1 – Friday 5 March only, 9.00 am – 3.30pm. You must allow 24 hours from placing and paying for your order before collecting from the school. You will need to ensure you provide the student name in your order for ease of identification on collection.
3. Hair Colour - Has your child experimented with a different hair colour? We understand that many children like to experiment with their hair colour during times away from school. This is the key time to ensure that all hair colour is of a natural hair colour.
4. Make-up: Many students also like to experiment with false tan, make-up, false eye-lashes and false nails. Whilst we understand the desire for students to experiment in this way, we request that this is kept for holiday periods and that a “natural look” is right for the school environment. This includes no nail varnish or nail extensions, no false eye-lashes, no false tan and unobtrusive make-up.
5. Jewellery: Finally, please remember that the only item of jewellery allowed (other than a watch or medic alert bracelet/necklace) is a single stud in the lower ear. No other ear or facial piercings are permitted. No rings or bracelets are allowed.

As with all things, parental support with these standards is greatly appreciated.

Mr P Walsh
Assistant Principal

COVID Testing

As students begin their return to school from Monday 8 March 2021, I would like to take this opportunity to advise you of the testing arrangements that we will have in place.

Following the guidance from the Department for Education, all students need to be tested three times in school. Parents/carers of students for whom we have not yet received completed testing consent forms have been contacted, and new forms issued electronically. We would be grateful if you could complete and return your consent forms by no later than Monday 1 March.

All testing of students will take place in school. However, as you will understand, we have a large number of students to accommodate and to that end we will be undertaking the testing of some year groups next week – these dates are for those students who are NOT currently attending school.

Wednesday 3 March:	Years 11 and 13
Thursday 4 March:	Years 10 and 12
Friday 5 March:	Year 7

The testing will take place in the gym and students should not enter the main building but access the gym from the external door beside PE. Once we have received the completed consent forms, we will contact you again to advise timings for the testing on the above dates.

The testing arrangements for all year groups for the remaining tests are:

Monday 8 March:	Years 11 and 13
Tuesday 9 March:	Years 10 and 12
Wednesday 10 March:	Year 7
Thursday 11 March:	Years 9, 11 and 13
Friday 12 March:	Years 8, 10 and 12
Monday 15 March:	Years 7 and 9
Tuesday 16 March:	Years 8 and 10
Wednesday 17 March:	No testing
Thursday 18 March:	No testing
Friday 19 March:	Years 8 and 9

Please note that we will not be offering ‘catch up’ testing sessions, for any student who misses one of the three testing dates above. Following completion of our in-school testing, all students for whom we have received consent will be provided with home test kits, to continue their testing at home. You will also need to record the test result on the track and trace website, but full instructions will be contained in the packs your child brings home.

If you have any queries, please direct them to the restart email address: restart@lordlawson.academy

Kind Regards

Mrs L Alder
Assistant Principal

How GCSEs, AS and A levels will be awarded in summer 2021

Working out your grade	Evidence	Results and appeals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Graded by teacher judgement Not graded by an algorithm School and college assessments can continue You'll only be assessed on what you've been taught Your teacher will tell you what evidence is used to grade you Private candidates to work with a school, college or exam centre to provide evidence for them to be graded	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mocks, tests and work already done can be used as evidence Non-exam assessment should continue Non-exam assessments can be used as evidence even if incomplete Art & design grade based only on your portfolio Teachers can use question banks provided by exam boards if they want to Results will be based on completed and future work, so keep doing your best	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Results days AS and A level 10 August GCSE 12 August If you're unhappy with your grade, you can appeal it. First step is to submit an appeal to your school or college.<p>You can find out more details from your school, college or exam board, or by visiting the Ofqual website</p> www.gov.uk/ofqual

World Book Day: Thursday 4 March 2021

Next week is World Book Day. For those of you who don't know much about this, the following is a statement from the World Book Day charity:

‘World Book Day changes lives through a love of books and shared reading. Our mission is to promote reading for pleasure, offering every child and young person the opportunity to have a book of their own. Reading for pleasure is the single biggest indicator of a child’s future success – more than their family circumstances, their parents’ educational background or their income. We want to see more children, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, with a life-long habit of reading for pleasure and the improved life chances this brings them.’

To celebrate this important cause, students will be taking part in a range of activities during tutor time such as completing quizzes, reading extracts from texts and will be introduced to a virtual library of audio books available to them on MS Teams.

During remote English lessons this week, all KS3 students will be given the opportunity to respond creatively to a text they have studied as a group. We look forward to seeing their costumes, meals, board games, sculptures and other creative responses!

Mrs F Robinson-Dodd
Acting Subject Leader - English

World Book Day 2021

To promote World Book Day further, World Book Day have made their £1 book token available digitally. The token can be downloaded, printed and exchanged at participating book sellers and supermarkets for one of this year's special £1 books.

To access a digital book token, please use the following link:

https://www.worldbookday.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/booktoken_SecondaryUK.pdf

For more information about this year’s £1 books, visit the official World Book Day site at:

<https://www.worldbookday.com/books/>

The site also offers fantastic opportunities to listen to free audiobooks, help with choosing books to read for pleasure, and access to upcoming free digital events. For further information about free eBooks and audiobooks online please visit:

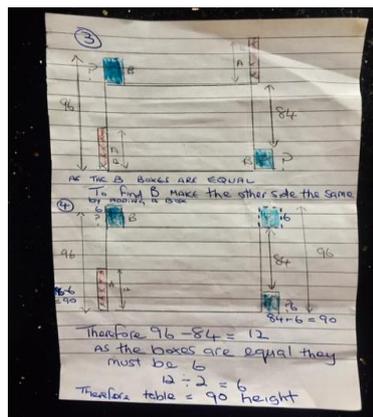
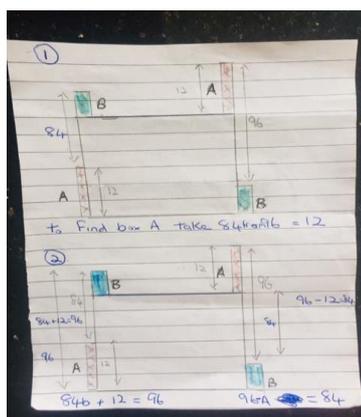
<https://www.worldbookday.com/world-of-stories/> and <https://readforgood.org/reading-inspiration/>

Miss B Dixon
LRC Coordinator

Family Maths Challenge – The Solution!

We had many answers to the challenge, so thank you all for participating. Well done to James Alderson from 7TU1 and his family for working out the correct height of the table in the family maths challenge, and for the beautifully presented solution with a clear explanation. As well as finding the solution to the challenge, James' entry also displayed the working out the height and width of the blocks; they'd clearly taken the family challenge to heart and went the extra mile!

Mrs D Jackson
Subject Leader – Maths



Learning Resource Centre

Reading is such an important skill, underpinning academic progress, and influencing imagination and life choices. It is for this reason that our Learning Resource Centre offers a substantial selection of current books and resources to aid reading for pleasure and learning.

Our students are automatically members of the Learning Resource Centre and can borrow books to read in school and at home. This service is free. Book stock is consistently replenished with new and popular reads. All we ask is that books are returned in good order for use by other students.

Our Learning Resource Centre celebrates and encourages reading for pleasure every day and we look forward to all our students celebrating reading with us on their return to school.

The Learning Resource Centre is open after school from 3:15pm - 4:15pm Monday to Thursday, and from 3:15pm – 4:00pm on a Friday.

Miss B Dixon
LRC Coordinator

The Gateshead Autism Information Hub

Gateshead Autism Information Hub now has a Facebook Group for information sharing. The Hub welcomes parents and carers of autistic children, professionals and practitioners, autistic individuals and anyone with an interest in autism. You do not need to be a Gateshead resident to join.

The Facebook group isn't intended to replicate the Gateshead Autism Information Hub drop-ins and support groups, but to supplement what they already deliver at the Elgin Centre. Consequently, there will be limited resources available on the Facebook group so as not to devalue the important parts of the Autism Hub (mainly the face-to-face contact and professional advice). They want to encourage visits to the drop-ins, but recognise that this isn't possible for some people – the Facebook group partly exists to increase the reach of the Autism Information Hub and allow access to those people who can't get to drop-ins in person, but who still need the information and support that they provide.

You can find the Facebook Group here: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/387109345806360>

It is intended that the Facebook group will reduce the need for the existing (but cumbersome) Support Group mailing list, as all information currently shared in this way will now be shared on Facebook. However, a smaller mailing list will be retained for those members who prefer not to use Facebook, so that they can continue to receive joining details for Zoom meetings and reminders of Autism Hub drop-in and support group dates, when they resume at the Elgin Centre. No other information will be shared through the mailing list.

Any support group members not on Facebook who would like to continue receiving limited information by email, please email karen.thirlaway@blueyonder.co.uk to be added to the new list.

Ms N McCarthy
SEND-CO

National Careers Week 2021: Monday 1 – Saturday 6 March

Following on from National Apprenticeship week earlier this month, we will be supporting National Careers Week (NCW) next week with a range of opportunities for students. We are looking to deliver this in tutorials, lessons and through a range of events in the Careers bulletin which will be sent to you all in a separate email. Please look out for daily updates on social media too.

Thank you.

Mrs Jordan
Careers Lead

Miss Leigh
Careers Coordinator