

# Parent Bulletin

Week commencing Monday 29 March 2021 – Week 2

Dear Parents and Carers

As we approach the last week of this extraordinary term, I want to reflect on some of the achievements of the term.

- We expected to start the term in January with all our students in classes, as we had ended in December. Just one day into term, however, the government changed direction abruptly, and we were asked to educate most students at home. School remained open to vulnerable students and children of critical workers.
- We had to put into place effective systems for carrying out COVID-19 lateral flow tests. Our support staff, through the most amazing team effort, ably led by our Business Manager Mrs Linda Alder, sprang into action and implemented a very professional testing system, which most of your children have now experienced.
- We quickly created systems to deliver remote education. We refined and improved these systems, so that by the end of the lockdown we were able to deliver an effective and dynamic mixture of live and asynchronous learning. Many students are not significantly behind where we would expect them to be.
- We used the opportunities provided by remote education to improve our teachers' skills in creating and delivering good lessons. As a result, we have emerged from lockdown with a teaching staff that is better-equipped and more flexible in helping your children to learn effectively.
- We monitored students' engagement in this period of remote education. We were able to supply over 100 laptops and internet devices, to enable more students to study effectively at home.
- Where students were unable or unwilling to engage effectively with the remote education we provided, we considered that they were becoming educationally vulnerable. We therefore brought them into the academy, for single days, attending a few days a week, or full-time. At the end of lockdown, we were educating 15% of our students on site, more than most other local secondary schools. In this way we responded to the needs of our students and helped them make better progress.
- Daily tutorial sessions were introduced at the beginning of each day, to help students and their families start the day well and adjust to working from home. This also helped tutors evaluate how well students were coping with lockdown and remote education, and let them respond appropriately.
- Students with special educational needs were prioritized for extra one-to-one help. Most of these students attended the academy, either full time or on a part-time basis. Some students thrived at home and were able to continue to make good progress.
- Students with mental health needs were given access to pastoral staff and to our school counsellor, who continued to work from school during lockdown.
- The social work and early help team attached to the school worked with our pastoral staff and were able to increase our capacity to offer support to students and their families.
- We kept in touch with parents very frequently via social media (Twitter and Facebook), our website, phone calls and emails. Many of you have told us how much you appreciated this contact.

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- Ofsted inspected the steps leaders and teachers have taken to provide remote education, and the feedback was positive and affirming, with some useful points for continued development. The draft report has been received by the school, and it will be published soon by Ofsted.
- At the end of lockdown, we introduced a phased return for students. This gave the opportunity for students to access regular COVID-19 tests, and to reacclimatise to the school's expectations.
- Attendance has been good, although we hope this will improve further next week.
- Rooming systems have been altered, so that students need to move around the academy less. As a result, corridors have been calmer, and more productive lesson time has been gained.
- The large majority of students are happy to be back in school, learning with their friends and benefiting from their teachers' expertise.
- A very small number of students are not behaving well, and we are taking a very firm line with them, whilst being compassionate about any additional problems they may be facing. We will not allow them to disrupt the education of other children, who have already lost so much time in school.
- There have been very few positive COVID-19 cases since the return from lockdown, and none of them has been attributable to infection within school. This shows that our precautions and safety measures are working.

I hope you will agree that this has been a tough term, but also a very productive one!

Best wishes

***Mr A T Fowler***  
***Principal***

25<sup>th</sup> March 2021

Dear Parents/Carers

Whilst the number of positive Covid-19 cases being identified in our communities is reducing, those cases are only a small percentage of the people who potentially have the infection as many will not have any symptoms. It is likely that the number of cases remains relatively high; the infection is still being spread; and we know that cases can escalate very quickly if the conditions are right and people mix unnecessarily. With our schools now fully reopened, it is vital that we all continue to do everything we can to prevent the spread of Covid-19.

From the 8<sup>th</sup> March we have seen a very small relaxation in some of the national restrictions, as part of the Governments' roadmap out of lockdown. This now means you can leave home and spend time in outdoor public spaces for recreation and exercise with your household or support bubble, if you are eligible for one, or with one other person from outside your household

As part of the next stage from 29<sup>th</sup> March you will be able to meet outside in groups of up to a maximum of 6 people (the Rule of 6) or with one other household. However, people from different households will still need to socially distance from each other. This will apply in all outdoor settings, including private gardens.

We would like to thank you for your continued support in helping schools to ensure they remain as safe as possible for children and staff, and it is really important that this support continues. However, there have been recent reports of some children attending indoor birthday parties or family celebrations with people who are not part of their household or support bubble. There have also been increasing reports of secondary school pupils gathering in large groups outside of school hours. We would like to remind you that both of these things are still not allowed by law, and risk financial penalties being applied by the Police.

Our schools have gone to great lengths to protect both children and staff and would hate to have to close classes as a consequence of someone taking an unnecessary and illegal risk. Children have missed enough school and we must all play our part in keeping them and school staff safe. Our schools have a responsibility to keep everybody safe and to challenge families who are not following guidance and therefore putting other families and school staff at risk.

We therefore ask that you ensure you, and your children, are aware of the current rules and guidance. Please continue to maintain social distancing at all times, including when exercising, meeting other people from outside your household (where allowed), and when dropping off and collecting your children from school.

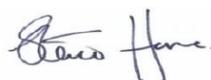
We appreciate these remain worrying times and that families are understandably anxious. We know you will do all you can to help keep our schools safe for children and staff, and to enable them to remain open for everybody. If we all play our part, then we should hopefully be able to look forward to a summer with less restrictions.

Thank you for your continued support and cooperation.

Yours sincerely,



Alice Wiseman  
Director of Public Health



Steve Horne  
Service Director  
Education, Schools & Inclusion

### **Immunisations: Tuesday 20 April**

Further to information in the parent bulletin two weeks ago, the immunisation team have now changed the immunisations that were to be given to students on 20 April in school. Students are now receiving their immunisations for the following:

- Year 9 DTP and MEN C immunisation + year 9 HPV immunisation (2nd dose)
- Year 10 DTP and MEN C immunisation catch-up (8 students)
- Year 11 DTP and MEN C immunisation catch-up (2 students)

No other immunisations will take place in school on this date.

Should you have any questions please contact the First Aid unit in school, email me at: [kmaynard@lordlawson.academy](mailto:kmaynard@lordlawson.academy).

Thank you

*Mrs K Maynard*  
*Student Support Co-ordinator*

### **The Lord Lawson of Beamish Academy Sponsored Hike for Comic Relief - Update**

I am delighted to inform you that we have travelled over 1,400 miles in our sponsored hike in aid of Comic Relief! It is fantastic to know that our school community have achieved this together while also increasing levels of physical activity. I have been amazed by the level of participation of students and staff, and I am sincerely grateful for all of the support from parents and carers.

This PE fundraiser event officially comes to an end on Sunday 28 March 2021. I wonder if we can reach 2,000 miles by the end of the weekend!

I would like to remind you that sponsorship money and financial donations will be collected during tutor time on Monday 29 March. Even a donation of £1 would be a wonderful help in supporting Comic Relief. Students can donate even if they have not taken part in the 'hike'. Donating is not an expectation and is completely voluntary.

This year, a large percentage of money raised will go directly to supporting those who have suffered financially due to COVID-19.

If your child has gained sponsors through fundraising, please ensure that sponsorship forms are brought to school on Monday. If the gift aid section on the form has been completed by any sponsor, this enables us to claim an additional 25% value of the original donation, which also goes to Comic Relief.

Thank you again for your support - it is greatly appreciated.

*Mr L Cumiskey*  
*Personal Development Coordinator*



### **Years 7 – 13: Free Online Technology Showcase – Coolest Projects**

Does your child enjoy making things using technology? The Raspberry Pi Foundation is hosting an exciting, global technology showcase for young people, called 'Coolest Projects'. The showcase is online, open to all young people up to the age of 18, and is free to participate in.

Get started at home with their free digital making resources:

- **Explore more than 200 free step-by-step project guides for learning coding at home**
- **Download our free Coolest Projects workbook that walks you through the creation process, from brainstorming to picking a project**

Your creation will be showcased in the Coolest Projects online gallery, for people all over the world to see!

Visit the **Coolest Projects website** to get started right away: <https://online.coolestprojects.org/>

Bring your tech idea to life and share your project with the world. Register by Monday 3 May 2021.

Good luck everyone!

*Mrs A Jordan*  
*Careers Lead*

*Miss J Leigh*  
*Careers Coordinator*

### **Years 7 – 9: Elite Medics**

Elite Medics, one of the fastest growing tuition academies, has designed a series of monthly online classes to help your child excel in their education, and stay on top of their learning. Teachers include doctors who have graduated from Oxbridge Universities.

There are 250 FREE SPACES for Biology and Chemistry LIVE classes for students in years 7 - 9.

The next Live Class is on the 27 and 28 March 2021, and can be accessed via the following link.

<https://www.facebook.com/954268354714478/posts/2003272556480714/>

Regards

*Miss J Leigh*  
*Careers Coordinator*

**Safe parking and collection of students at the end of the school day**

Can parents/carers please note that, for the safety of our students, the external school gates are closed between 3.00 and 3.30pm daily. This is to ensure that any students (or staff) exiting site at this time on foot can do so safely.

We also remind you that the prohibitive markings and double yellow lines adjacent to the academy entrance should not be parked on. The yellow markings outside the entrance, exit, and adjacent to the school indicate that parking restrictions are in place and that no waiting is allowed at any time, regardless of whether or not there is signage evident indicating this.

Please ensure that any person who may be collecting a child on your behalf is also made aware of our expectations.

Thank you

***Mr K Maynard***  
***Site Manager***