

24 February 2021

Dear Parent / Carer

We welcome the decision that children will return to face to face teaching from the 8 March, our students have been impressive in their efforts and progress in lockdown. We recognise the importance of their return to school, both in terms of learning and their mental health with the ability to socialise and return to as close to normality as we can provide.

This letter focuses on a safe and organised phased return to school. I will write to you again regarding the details of assessment for Year 11, systems on site and changes in the guidance such as the recommendation to wear facemasks in classrooms.

Timings of the school day and uniform requirements are unchanged from those in the autumn term.

It is vital that we test students in a socially distanced manner for their first lateral flow test. If we bring students on site for the first test without social distancing and then have a positive case, the class bubble (KS3), or year group bubble (KS4), would immediately have to return home and isolate for 10 days.

No student will be tested without consent from their parents and all students swab themselves.

Students will begin learning in school on the day after these booked tests. Your son/daughter does not have to be tested to return to school with the rest of their year group, but it is strongly recommended.

Parents will use our “parents evening” booking system to book appointments on the specified day at a time between 8:00am and 4:00pm, there will be appointments for 5 students every 10 minutes. They should enter the upper school test centre, via the external door to the upper school canteen.

Following the test, students should return home and approximately 30 mins later we will contact parents with the result of the test, if it is invalid we will ask the student to return and re-test. Online learning will continue for these students and the other year groups prior to their return.

If a student tests positive, that student will have to isolate for 10 days, but as they will not have been contacts of other students in their bubble, it will only affect that student and any contacts they have made in the previous 48 hours.

A close contact is now defined by the NHS as (altered because of the new variant)

- face-to-face contact including being coughed on or having a face-to-face conversation within one metre
- been within one metre for one minute or longer without face-to-face contact



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- been within 2 metres of someone for more than 15 minutes (either as a one-off contact, or added up together over one day)

It would be useful for students to note who has been a contact in the previous 48 hours prior to having the first booked test in school.

It is Public Health England who will make the decision on who is a close contact in school. Recent experience of cases in other schools mean that it is likely a whole bubble will be asked to isolate after students have mixed on the first day of return.

We are planning to start the booked testing on Friday 5 March so that Year 11 can return on Monday 8 March and maximise their time in school. We will then bring back the other years as shown below, with all students on-site by Friday 12 March.

We will send a text home once the parents evening system is updated to include these appointments and details of how to book.

	Year 11	Year 10	Year 9	Year 8	Year 7
Friday 5 March	Initial Booked Test				
Monday 8 March	Students return to learning in school & take another on-site test*	Initial Booked Test			
Tuesday 9 March		Students return on site			Initial Booked Test
Wednesday 10 March				Initial Booked Test	Students return on site
Thursday 11 March		On-site test*	Initial Booked Test	Students return on site	
Friday 12 March	On-site test*		Students return on site		On-site test
Monday 15 March				On-site test	
Tuesday 16 March		On-site test	On-site test		
Wednesday 17 March	On-site test*				On-site test
Thursday 18 March				On-site test	
Friday 19 March			On-site test		

*Additional test centre is being constructed in the library for on-site testing.

On site testing after return will take place during lesson times with students being withdrawn for a few minutes to take their test and then returning to the classroom.

The Government are recommending 3 tests in the first two weeks, Year 11 will however have 4 tests, including their first socially distanced booked test on Friday 5 March, to enable them to return to classrooms as quickly as possible on Monday 8 March. Be aware that continued testing will require students to be withdrawn from classes to a complex schedule on the day they have on-site testing going forward.

I want to express my appreciation to the volunteers who will help us to run the testing centres. These volunteers are going through our rigorous safeguarding systems and are being trained in the test centres early next week.

Students on site this week who have been tested, have been professional and efficient and have given us confidence that the logistics of carrying out many thousands of tests on site within two weeks is achievable. We have prepared this [presentation](#) (included on a previous letter) to inform you as to what the testing will involve. It will be useful if students can view this presentation immediately prior to the testing in order that we can keep to the schedule.

To give consent for testing, please use this [form](#). Students aged 15 and below will need parental consent, whilst students aged 16 must consent themselves. In both cases, please can parental contact details be recorded, so that you can be informed promptly of the initial test result.

The lockdown has reduced cases in the local area, but has not completely eliminated them as you can see in this [presentation](#).

The provision, by the government, of these Covid tests offers the opportunity for positive cases to be identified and isolated. It is vital for the safety of our wider community, and to prevent continuing disruption to education from Covid-19, that we successfully engage with the testing programme.

Most children are asymptomatic whilst infectious and during lockdown it has been children attending schools where the prevalence has grown. I would urge all students to take part in the testing if they feel they can. It will be the case that classes or year groups will need to isolate if we have positive cases, but in the long term there will be less disruption if we keep the prevalence in our area low. After 15 March, students and staff will use home test kits but we will maintain the on site test centre for those students who cannot test at home, we are awaiting details of how these home tests will be distributed.

We will send a presentation next week with the year group designated outdoor spaces and operational details around use of canteens. There are minor alterations to the arrangements on site. We expect the Department for Education will have more updates before 8 March and it is sensible to delay publishing final details until these are settled.

Yours faithfully



Mr S Dallimore
Headteacher