

24th February 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

Return to school - Week commencing the 8th March

I am sure you and your children are all looking forward to the return to school and we are looking forward to seeing everyone again and getting back to a degree of normality. The week commencing the 8th March will see a phased return to school in order to enable the mass testing programme.

The following Year groups will return in the following order:

Monday 8th March- Year 11

Tuesday 9th March- Year 10

Wednesday 10th March- Year 7

Thursday 11th March- Year 8

Friday 12th March- Year 9

Mass asymptomatic testing

Rapid testing using lateral flow devices (LFD)s will support the return to face-to-face teaching by helping to identify people who are infectious but do not have coronavirus symptoms. The initial mass testing will involve students having three tests over a two-week period. Home test kits will be provided thereafter to all students to conduct twice weekly testing at home. Further details regarding the home testing will be supplied in due course. **Testing is voluntary but it is strongly encouraged.**

When students arrive back at school, they will need to remain in their form groups until they have received a negative result. Once they have received a negative test result, they will be able to return to their normal timetable. The logistics of the initial mass testing places quite a few challenges on the school which is why we need to ensure a phased return for each year group. Remote learning will remain in place for all year groups until they return to face-to-face teaching. **In addition, we will not be able to cater for children of key workers as a separate group in the week commencing the 8th March.** Children currently in school will need to complete remote learning until their year group returns. We are able to cater for a very small group of vulnerable learners where extenuating circumstances means that your child cannot access remote learning from home. This will need to be arranged in consultation with myself, Mrs Bryant or the Engage team.

Full details of the lateral flow testing process are enclosed in the supplementary information. Students who do not take part in the asymptomatic testing will need to remain with their form until their form has been tested and can return to normal lessons.

Our testing team have all been trained to the required standard and we have been successfully testing staff and students in school for a six-week period. Those taking the test will be supervised by trained staff. The lateral flow tests are quick and easy to undertake, using a swab of the nose and throat. Results (which take around half an

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hour from testing) will be shared directly with the individual participant and parent/ carer. The student/ parent will also receive an email notification or text message of a positive or negative result from the online NHS system.

Testing will take place in the morning for each year group, as far as we can possibly manage. This will allow us to identify any potential cases and isolate groups before they mix in the larger school. Any child who tests positive will need to be collected from school and return home and we will then inform any close contacts of the need to self-isolate. Any child who tests positive will need to self-isolate for 10 days from the point of testing. If your child tests positive on an LFD test, the entire household and support bubble must also self-isolate for 10 days. If your child is identified as a close contact of a child who tests positive on the LFD tests, they will need to self-isolate for 10 days, but the remainder of the household does not need to isolate, unless your child develops symptoms.

The LFD testing is for asymptomatic testing only and should not be used by anyone who is displaying symptoms. If your child develops any symptoms of coronavirus (continuous cough, fever, loss of taste or smell) you should ensure they do not attend school and should arrange for a PCR test either at a test site or through a home test kit. The school has a small number of PCR home test kits that can be supplied to any family unable to access a test site.

We aim to use the following testing programme with each year group:

	Monday 8th	Tuesday 9th	Wednesday 10th	Thursday 11th	Friday 12th
Return to school	11	10	7	8	9
Test 1	11	10	7	8	9
Test 2				11	10
	Monday 15th	Tuesday 16th	Wednesday 17th	Thursday 18th	Friday 19th
Test 2	8	9	7		Catch up
Test 3	11	10	8	9	

Consent

All students who participate in asymptotic testing must have parental consent. Students may withdraw their consent and not participate, even if their parents have consented. No child will be forced or coerced into taking an LFD test. Please could all parents complete the consent form which indicates whether you give or do not give consent for your child to take part in LFD testing. **Please could you complete this consent form by Monday 1st March.** Please complete a separate form for each child who attends school. Hard copies of the consent form are available on request from the school office.

<https://forms.gle/8KwWKyF6QmzzQyes5>

Face coverings

As an additional measure of control the Government has recommended the use of face coverings by all children and adults in communal areas including classrooms. Students will be required to wear their face covering in the school building at all times unless eating or engaged in physical activity. Students will not need to wear a face covering outside. Face visors or shields should not be worn as an alternative to a face covering.

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Attendance

School attendance will be mandatory for all students from the 8th March in accordance with their phased return date. Any child who has been confirmed as clinically extremely vulnerable and has been advised to shield will be provided with remote provision.

National Careers Week

Next week is National careers week and students' remote provision will focus on careers based learning on Thursday 4th and Friday 5th March. KS3 students will follow a two-day NHS careers programme and KS4 students will take part in a virtual work experience day or develop their Unifrog post 16 applications on Thursday 4th March. Friday 5th March will be a catch-up day for KS4 students to ensure they are ready for their return to school the following week. Full details of the careers provision will be available on google classroom.

I appreciate that there has been a lot of information in this letter and that many parents may still have questions or concerns regarding the return to school. I can assure you that our established cleaning regulations and Covid secure measures will still be in place and we will be implementing a strict system of controls to ensure everyone's safety. We also appreciate that the most important thing for children is to see their friends, take part in all their usual activities and get back to normal, so we will do everything in our power to normalise the experience for all students. We are aware that many children will have suffered anxiety, low mood and isolation and we will continue to prioritise mental health. We also know that Year 11 students will be feeling very anxious about their GCSE assessments. We still do not know any further information about the format of assessment yet, but will let you know as soon as we do.

We are really looking forward to opening our doors fully to all students again and look forward to welcoming your children back to school.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

With best wishes



Helen Watts
Principal

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