

26th February 2021

Dear Parents / carer,

I hope you are all safe, well and glad to hear from the Prime Minister, that things are starting to return to some semblance of normality.

Whilst we cannot wait to welcome our students back to school, we do need to make you aware of some of the challenges we face in preparing to do so safely. As part of the reopening of schools we must provide on-site testing for all staff and students in the first 2 weeks and prepare them, and yourselves, for home testing after that.

With parental consent, students need to have 3 lateral flow tests in school (3-5 days apart where it is possible) before switching to testing at home. In order to facilitate this, we will stagger the return of all students over the week commencing 8th March. We have been instructed by the government to prioritise the return of Key Stage 4 students and we will be sending out further details of how this will look in a second letter shortly.

It is clear in the guidance that on-site testing is, at this stage, voluntary, but it is seen as a key feature in the updated system of controls to ensure as safe a return to face-to-face teaching as possible. Included in the new guidance are clear guidelines on maintaining social distancing and the wearing of face coverings, 'face coverings should be worn by adults and pupils when moving around the premises, outside of classrooms, such as in corridors and communal areas' and that 'face coverings should be worn in classrooms or during activities unless social distancing can be maintained.' This part of the guidance will be in force until at least the end of this half term.

To allow us to accommodate parent consultation days and prepare for mass asymptomatic testing and for staff to begin teaching from school on Monday, 8th March, all learning will be asynchronous, meaning no live-lessons, from Wednesday 3rd March. Therefore, there will be no live lessons on these days. Students should check ClassCharts and the relevant MS Teams channel for work.

Children currently accessing the provision for vulnerable and critical workers can continue to attend until Friday, 5th March. From Monday, 8th March these students will follow the timetable of testing and return to school of their relevant year group.

As previously mentioned, a further letter providing the day and time that your child(ren) will have their first lateral flow test and the day that they will be returning to school, together with a consent form, will follow in the next few days.

Kind regards,

Graeme Wrightson
Headteacher