

Wednesday 24th February

Dear Parents and Carers

It is fantastic news that we are at last in a position to be able to plan for a return to school for all students from Monday 8th March.

The government has produced the following guidance:

'Secondary schools should offer pupils testing at an on-site Asymptomatic Testing Site (ATS) from 8 March. Testing and return of pupils can be phased during the first week to manage the number of pupils passing through the test site at any one time. You should offer 3 tests, 3 to 5 days apart.

You have the flexibility to consider how best to deliver testing on a phased basis from 8 March, depending on your circumstances and local arrangements, but you should prioritise vulnerable children and children of critical workers, and year groups 10 to 13.

Pupils should return to face-to-face education following their first negative test result. Pupils not undergoing testing should attend school in line with your phased return arrangements. Schools will have discretion on how to test students over that week as they return to the classroom.

Testing is voluntary. If consent is provided, pupils will be asked to self-swab at the on-site ATS. Individuals with a positive LFD test result will need to self-isolate in line with the [guidance for households with possible coronavirus infection](#). Those with a negative LFD test result can continue to attend school unless they have individually been advised otherwise by NHS Test and Trace or Public Health professionals (for example as a close contact). They should continue to apply the measures in the system of controls to themselves and the wider school setting.'

On our return to school we will be implementing a different approach for the primary and secondary phases. All pupils in primary will be returning on Monday 8th March and there will be a staggered start in place for secondary students

Over the next few days we will be reviewing our current risk assessment and considering what we will need to have in place to provide a safe return for all students and thereby reduce the risk of transmission of Covid-19.

We are in a fortunate position that we already have a well-rehearsed method of testing of both staff and students. On Monday, for example, we tested 100 students. This took approximately 2 hours to complete and for all results to be known. The lessons learnt will certainly help, when we welcome back approximately 1500 students who will each need to be tested 3 times.

The areas in particular that we will need to consider are:

- Confirming the dates by which we can safely return specific year groups
- Providing mass testing in school and preparing for home testing
- Creating a 'waiting area' when the first test is taken

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- Creating a timetable to allow for subsequent tests to be conducted
- Confirming consent for testing
- Revised guidance on the wearing of face coverings
- Supporting extremely vulnerable staff and students
- The use of remote education during the phased return

It is a logistical challenge to test and welcome back so many students. I will write to you at the beginning of next week to confirm in detail the plan for this. I hope you appreciate that not all students will be able to return on Monday 8th March and it will take a few days for us to welcome everyone back to school. We will provide online learning for students not returning on the 8th March.

Thank you for your continued understanding and support.

Regards



Gary Wakefield

Vice Principal