

23rd February 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

Wider Reopening of Schools in England

I hope that you have been able to enjoy a restful half term. I am sure that you are by now aware of the key details from the Government's road map, which includes the directive that all schools in England should fully reopen from 8th March onwards. I am also pleased to be able to report that the DfE has now updated and published its guidance, which outlines the processes for reopening alongside the expected additional mitigation measures that will be required given that we know that the dominant strain of the virus within the UK is considerably more contagious than previous strains. A link to the updated guidance can be found [here](#).

The updated guidance is extensive. However, there are some key changes that I will highlight at this point. Firstly, returning **secondary students will be tested three times on site** and then again once at home in the first two weeks after reopening. They will then be provided with home kits for twice weekly testing thereafter. During the week of 8th March, students will only be expected to return following their first negative test result. Where parents and carers do not provide consent for their child to be tested the student concerned should return to school at the same time as the rest of their year group and not before.

The government also confirmed that it is recommending that the use of face coverings in secondary schools be extended to **all** indoor environments, including classrooms, for a 'limited period' until Easter. The DfE guidance confirms that schools should ensure face coverings are used in recommended circumstances. Please note that the school will be making reasonable adjustments for students with hearing impairments and that we will continue to recognise where some students are exempt.

Please also note that attendance at school in all cases will be mandatory, with the exception of children who are categorised as clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV), or those with a positive test result or are displaying COVID symptoms.

We are currently in the process of fully reviewing the guidance and updating our policies and procedures. I am hopeful that I will be able to write to you as early as Monday of next week to fully outline the plans for the wider reopening. In the meantime, in preparation for the return to school, I would ask that all parents and carers to prepare for their child / children to return to school by ensuring that they have adequate **fabric** face coverings and that each child has their own conveniently sized bottle of sanitiser, which can be carried in a blazer pocket. We do have numerous sanitiser (and hand washing) facilities around the school and hand sanitiser bottles are available in each classroom. However, we do believe that having a convenient bottle of sanitiser within each child's possession will make the maintenance of high levels of hand hygiene far easier, which in turn should make our environment even safer.

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Headteacher

I am also pleased to be able to report that we have scaled up our COVID testing facilities, which should allow for efficient mass testing of students when they return to school. We anticipate that the return to school will be phased beginning on 8th March, which will allow for each year group to be tested on their return. **Therefore, we do expect that all students will return to face-to-face teaching in school on specific dates during the week beginning 8th March. We will publish the specific testing and return dates for each year group shortly.** As a reminder, participation in the lateral flow testing programme is **voluntary** but with high levels of participation, we believe that it is a measure that will help to keep the community safe. If your child has NOT yet attended school, then please click on the relevant year group link below and complete the Google form provided by **3.00pm on Friday 26th February**. Please ensure that you use the separate links if you have children in different year groups within the school.

[Year 7 Consent Form](#)

[Year 8 Consent Form](#)

[Year 9 Consent Form](#)

[Year 10 Consent Form](#)

[Year 11 Consent Form](#)

[Year 12 Consent Form](#)

[Year 13 Consent Form](#)

Finally, I would ask all parents and carers to take some time to talk to their child / children about the importance of the adherence to safety measures when they return to school. I understand that there remain some individuals within the community who believe that the pandemic is overstated, particularly given the fact that children on the whole are least affected by the virus. However, I must stress that further outbreaks within the school community would lead to additional periods of self isolation and, in the worst case scenario, a further period of school closure. This is something that we are desperate to avoid.

Thank you in advance for your support. We very much look forward to welcoming the children back to the school site from the 8th March.

Yours faithfully,



Gary Mullings
Headteacher