

23<sup>rd</sup> February 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

I hope that half term brought you all some rest and a welcome break from what has become the routine since the Christmas break. I want to thank everyone, once again, for your continued support and understanding as we collectively face the challenges that Covid-19 presents.

You will, no doubt, have seen the Prime Minister's announcement yesterday that schools will re-open fully, for all students, from Monday 8<sup>th</sup> March. As part of that process, there is an expectation that secondary schools will offer on-site testing to all students. Because of the scale of that logistical challenge, the Government has given secondary schools some discretion as to how to phase the return to school over that week. It is very likely that we will need to invite year groups back in a staggered order over the course of the week beginning 8<sup>th</sup> March and I will write to you early next week with further details about how we will do that.

We are looking forward very much to having all students back in school. At every stage of this crisis, our priority has been the health and the safety of all our students and staff and so we will be spending the coming days ensuring that the school is as safe as it possibly can be when all students return to learning on site.

There are several specific points about the full return to school that I wanted to briefly set out in this letter, which I hope are helpful and will prepare you for more detailed information next week.

### Testing

- All students will be consistently tested for Covid-19, using 'lateral flow' tests. It is not compulsory to take these tests, but the Government's health advice is that effective testing helps stop the virus spreading and will mean schools are as safe as possible, so is encouraging it.
- Trained staff and supervised/checked volunteers will supervise tests taken at school. Lateral flow tests are quick and easy to administer, using a swab of your nose and throat. Results take around half an hour from testing and will be shared directly with staff and students participating. For under-18s, staff can oversee the swab process. Where participants are under-16, parents or legal guardians will also be informed.
- Thank you to families who have already previously responded, either accepting or declining testing using the LFT (Lateral Flow Tests). If you have not responded please do so on the below linked form as soon as possible so we can make appropriate arrangements:

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=KbjZ4RaYVEydnK3i2OOqbs06qGdXedZOkeFgmIWGPi1UNFBMVjBJQ0w1SjM5MUg4Wk1GWdc5WVNTVS4u>

- Testing principles:
  - Students will be tested by trained staff three times at school during the first two to three weeks back.
  - Students will be allowed to attend lessons as normal on the day after their first negative result.

- After the first three tests have been taken in school, students will be provided with two rapid tests to use each week at home.
- Parents and carers will be required to report results to schools to record. We will confirm how this system will operate in due course.
- Students who develop Covid-19 symptoms should self-isolate immediately, in line with the current guidance and according to Government guidelines.
- If a student tests positive for Covid-19, they must not attend school for at least 10 days from the day their symptoms started (or the date of their positive test if they were not showing symptoms).
- After the initial three tests are administered in school, the school will retain a “small” testing site for those unable to test at home, while all our staff will also be given twice weekly home tests.

### **Masks**

- The Government has recommended the use of face masks indoors – including in classrooms – unless two-metre social distancing can be maintained. This policy will be reviewed over the Easter Holidays so will be in place until at least the end of this term, and applies to students, staff and visitors (including parents), unless they are exempt from wearing one.
- We therefore encourage all students and parents to ensure they have a suitable number of face masks ready for the resumption of school on 8<sup>th</sup> March.

Yesterday’s announcement is a welcome indication of the steps back to a more normal school experience. However, I want to reiterate how alert we are to the continued risk of Covid-19. We will continue to adhere to stringent health and safety measures now, and when fully open. Your support in helping us be as safe as possible is appreciated greatly and will help ensure the success of this next phase of reopening.

I hope this update is helpful, and reassuring. I recognise that you will have further questions around the timing and logistics of the testing process, as well as the precise date your child will be able to return to school. These details will take a few days to coordinate, and we will contact you again early next week.

Yours faithfully



Simon Warburton  
Principal