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Headteacher: Mr J Parr BA Hons

25th February 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

As you will be aware, on Monday 22nd February the Prime Minister set out the roadmap for our return from lockdown. We have now received the official guidance from the Department for Education (DfE), which schools will use to ensure a safe re-opening for students and staff. Much of the guidance is unchanged, so we are well placed to return to the systems we had established before lockdown. However, there are two significant aspects of the Government guidance to inform you of:

1. A Phased return and Lateral Flow Testing

The return is to be “phased during the first week to manage the number of pupils passing through the test site at any one time. Schools will have discretion on how to test students over that week as they return to the classroom” (DfE 22 February 2021). We are currently at the planning stage for this phased return/testing programme. Please bear with us; I am sure you can appreciate that processing consent forms, registering and administering up to 3 tests for each child (where consent has been provided) over 2 weeks, will take some planning.

Before half term I sent you a letter specifically about Lateral Flow Testing, with a link to a consent form. Thank you to parents/carers who have submitted the electronic consent form permitting your child to have a Lateral Flow Test. As a reminder, all testing remains optional; students will not be stopped from attending school if you do not consent to testing.

If you wish for your child to have a lateral flow test on return to school but have not yet given consent, please complete and submit the form (link below) by no later than 09:00am on Monday 01st March 2021.

[Consent form for Lateral Flow Testing](#)

When will my child/ren be able to return to school?

Students currently attending school (the children of Key Workers and vulnerable children) are expected to continue to come to school, however from 08th March when they attend, they will no longer be in their ‘Pod’, but instead follow their normal timetabled lessons. Any students within these groups with consent for Lateral Flow Testing will receive their first test on 08th March, with subsequent tests during the following fortnight. Teachers will return to working in school also at this point, therefore will return to face-to-face teaching for students as they return to school.

The phased return of all other students will commence on Monday 08th March. The DfE guidance makes it clear that Year 11 and Year 10 students, in their exam years, should return ahead of Key Stage 3 children. We will therefore phase the return of each year group across the week as below:

- Year 11 return on Monday 08th March.
- Year 10 return on Tuesday 09th March.
- Year 9 return on Wednesday 10th March.
- Year 8 return on Thursday 11th March.
- Year 7 return on Friday 12th March.

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Please note that attendance at school will become “mandatory” (DfE), so every child will be expected to return on the date they are assigned. However, until the date of their return to school, students will continue with the distance work set by their teachers. Please note that due to the mixture of some students being at home whilst others are in school during the week of phased return, there will not be any live lesson delivery for students. We will though ensure that lessons are set with work for students to continue their sequence of learning.

What will happen when my child returns to school?

When students arrive on site on their designated day, they will be grouped in class-sized bubbles in the ‘old gym’ where exam desks are set up in readiness. They will be supervised and have work provided to do until the testing of their year group is complete. They will be able to return to full time face-to-face teaching as soon as they have had one negative test result. Those students not having a test will need to wait for the testing to be completed. Should a student receive a positive test result, that student and those students identified as a close contact (e.g. having travelled on the same bus and seated close by), will need to be collected as soon as possible and then self-isolate for a period of 10 days, in line with Government guidance.

We aim to offer up to three on-site LFT’s (3-5 days apart) to students during the first two weeks of their return to school. However, we anticipate that as home testing kits become available, parents/carers will want to adopt testing within the home environment, in preference to their child being tested in school. The home testing kits will be supplied to parents/carers to carry out twice-weekly Lateral Flow Tests at home. We are not able to let you know how these kits are to be made available yet but will do so as soon as we can.

2. The wearing of face coverings

For an initial period (until Easter, in the first instance), face coverings will now need to be worn in classrooms, as well as inside the school building and outdoor where social distancing is not possible (break / lunch and marshalling points); the only exceptions to this are when wearing a face covering impacts on the ability to take part in strenuous activities/exercise (e.g. PE) or if your child is eating / drinking. We know that this will be a significant change for students and staff, but the Government are very clear about the importance of this measure to limit the spread of infection, given the much higher transmission rates. We ask for all students to come prepared for this, with appropriate face coverings (spares too). Only in exceptional circumstances where we are aware of a legitimate exemption are students permitted not to wear a face covering. We know that you will support us as we all work together to keep each other safe.

Some final things to mention:

- We will be providing dedicated virtual assemblies for all students before they return, with key information to remind them of systems, the equipment they must bring and how to stay safe.
- All school transport will be running as usual from 08th March, with collection timings to aim for arrival at school no earlier than 08:40am.
- The school canteen will be open from 08th March, so please ensure sufficient funds are available in ParentPay for your child to purchase food.
- Students are expected to return to school in full school uniform please.
- We anticipate an announcement about GCSE grading for Year 11 today. We will provide an update when we have received the specific guidance for schools.

Thank you for your ongoing support.

Kind regards,

John Parr
Headteacher