



26 February 2021

March 2021 Full School Opening Update

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope you are well and thank you again for all the support for your children and the school over this most recent lock down period. We are delighted that we are now in a position to open school to all of our students for face to face learning, and therefore I am writing to explain arrangements for phasing our students back into school from 8 March 2021. The Prime Minister and Department for Education announced the following on 22 February 2021;

- Schools and colleges will reopen to all pupils from 8 March 2021.
- All secondary school and college students will be offered 3 Covid-19 lateral flow tests 3-5 days apart as they return to the classroom from the 8 March 2021.
- Secondary schools and colleges will have discretion on how to stagger the return of their students over that week to allow them to be tested on return.
- After an initial programme of three tests in school, students will be provided with lateral flow tests to use each week at home.
- Secondary school and college staff will also be provided with tests to use twice each week at home.
- Staff and students in secondary schools and colleges are advised to wear face coverings in all areas, including classrooms, where social distancing cannot be maintained as a temporary extra measure.

As you can see, a key aspect in supporting full school opening is the delivery of an onsite Covid-19 testing programme using lateral flow tests for students and staff. Whilst these tests are voluntary, I urge parents to consent for their children to have them, as they form a crucial part in strengthening protective measures for students, staff and members of our communities.

I am sure you will appreciate that organising the testing programme is logistically very challenging, having to test well over 1500 individuals, however we are confident that all of our students can be back in school by Wednesday 10 March 2021 following completion of their first test. Please see the table below to explain when and at what time our students should return to school beginning on 8 March 2021:

Date	Who	When
Friday 5 March 2021	Sixth Form students for test only and then to go home	Beginning at 8.30 am. - a schedule of testing will be shared by Head of Sixth Form, Mrs Burton and the Sixth Form Team. Normal lessons begin Monday 8 March 2021.
Monday 8 March 2021	Year 11 students and key worker and vulnerable students who have attended during the lockdown period.	On site for 8.30 am. go to tutor bases, then tested between 8.30 am and 11.30 am Normal lessons P4&5 Remain in school until 3.10 pm.
Monday 8 March 2021	Year 10 students	Arrive on site from 11.30 am and before 11.45 am go to tutor bases, then tested between 12.00 pm. and 3.00 pm. Normal lessons Tuesday onwards
Tuesday 9 March 2021	Year 9 students	On site for 8.30 am. go to tutor bases, then tested between 8.30 am. and 11.30 am. Normal lessons P4&5 Remain in school until 3.00 pm.
Tuesday 9 March 2021	Year 8 students	Arrive on site from 11.30 am and before 11.45 am. go to tutor bases, then tested between 12.00 pm. and 2.55 pm. Normal lessons Wednesday onwards
Wednesday 10 March 2021	Year 7 students	On site for 8.30 am. go to tutor bases then tested between 8.30 am. and 11.30 am Normal lessons P4&5 Remain in school until 2.50 pm.

Students who do not have parental consent to be tested should return to school at the same time as others in their year group.



On this occasion, it is not logistically possible to arrange school bus transport for Year 10 and Year 8 students to arrive at school between 11.30 am and 11.45 am on their respective return dates. I hope that by providing early notice, travel arrangements to school can be made from home for these children. At the end of the school day students can catch our DW bus service, if required, to travel home along with other forms of transport.

Following completion of the year group's first test, providing results are negative, students will be able to return to timetabled lessons and the remainder of their school week's timetable. Should there be a positive test result, school will follow usual procedures of isolating and sending home the positive case to isolate for 10 days and any 'close contacts' who meet Public Health's close contact definition and are at risk of having the virus transmitted to them.

8 – 10 March Catering Arrangements

- Year 11 School catering on Monday 8 March available at 12.30 pm. Students' morning break will be in their form rooms where they will be permitted to eat snacks brought from home. Year 10 who arrive at school from 11.30 am. on Monday 8 March will have their lunchbreak in their classroom, therefore they should bring their own refreshments for this day only unless entitled to free school meals which will be provided on the day.
- Year 9 School catering on Tuesday 9 March available at 1.30 pm. Students' morning break will be in their form rooms where they will be permitted to eat snacks brought from home.
- Year 8 who arrive at school from 11.30 am. on Tuesday 9 March will have their lunchbreak in their classroom, therefore they should bring their own refreshments for this day only unless entitled to free school meals which will be provided on the day.
- Year 7 School catering on Wednesday 10 March available at 12.30 pm. Students' morning break will be in their form rooms where they will be permitted to eat snacks brought from home.

*The use of form rooms for the break that falls within each year group's testing period is to avoid wider mixing before all test results are known.

Ensuring school continues to run safely

Our planning for the return of all students from 8 March 2021 continues to focus on keeping risks to a minimum for all by:

- Minimising contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who have coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, or who have someone in their household who does, do not attend school.
- Having routines that ensure that students clean hands thoroughly and more often than usual.
- Promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach.
- Having enhanced cleaning routines in school, including cleaning frequently touched surfaces.
- Asking all staff and students to wear face coverings in all areas, including classrooms, where social distancing cannot be maintained as a temporary extra measure up to the Easter break.

Link here for parents and carers on national [guidance](#)

Returning to school – travel

Where it is safe and appropriate, please encourage your child to walk or cycle to school. If this is not possible we understand that some students will rely on car transport. When this is the case, please drop off and pick up your child within walking distance from school away from the main school entrance. Please can I respectfully request that any local parking is legal and mindful of our local residents' properties and access rights. As in previous months no cars other than staff and Sixth Form cars will be allowed on site. The only student exceptions will be for pre-arranged drop offs for disabled students or those with specific needs. These parents will already have permit passes to enter the school site.

DW Coaches will be operating a full bus service from Monday 8 March 2021, with sanitisation routines and specific seating arrangements in place to keep students together in their year group bubbles. All students should wear a face covering whilst travelling on the bus. The bus timetable is available on the school website.



School Uniform and Equipment

All students are expected to wear their full school uniform each day and bring a bag, equipment, books and the notes that they made at home during the lock down period. Government guidance makes it clear that it is not necessary to wash uniform items such as school blazers and ties each day. Please refer to the uniform guide on the school website for any clarification that you may require. If there are concerns with the availability of school uniform at this time please do not hesitate to contact school to enable us to help find a sensible route forward. As masks are now compulsory inside the building all students will need to bring a mask from home each day unless confirmed exempt due to medical / anxiety related reasons. These students have already been issued with a yellow pin badge which they must wear on their blazer each day.

Behaviour and Conduct

It is very important that our students understand the fact that they have a responsibility to keep not only themselves safe but also others during this very challenging time. On arrival, students will have all of the safety rules explained to them again which will be reinforced each day. We know that some will require our help to ease them back into school and to allay any fears that they have about safety.

A / AS Level and GCSE Assessments

On Thursday 25 February the government made an announcement about the proposed assessment models in support of our current A, AS and GCSE / Equivalent students. We will shortly be briefing students and updating parents about these proposals. Linked here is the [press release](#) for your review.

Recovery Planning

The government has announced a number of funding streams in support of recovery planning for students. We will be accessing these funds and sharing plans shortly of how school will approach provision for our students moving forwards in the short, medium and longer term.

Route map for students' learning and development in school

We are very hopeful that the return to full school opening for students will be welcomed by all. However, clearly some of our students will feel anxious and worried about returning to school for various reasons. Please rest assured that we will be doing all that we can to support them during this transition. We intend to begin to offer extra- curricular activities for our students within the first few weeks of full school opening in order to enrich their curriculum experience.

Following the completion of the 3 lateral flow tests in school, we will be distributing home testing kits from Monday 22 March 2021 for students to complete twice each week at home. Guidance will be provided closer to this date.

After this date we hope to be in a position to open up the curriculum offer for our students more widely, by providing them with the opportunities to move more freely around the school site, albeit in masks, abiding by the sanitising, cleaning and hygiene rules but experiencing hands on practical learning in workshops, laboratories, and other specialised rooms. This will reflect the wider national plans for freer movement in our communities and access to wider facilities and activities at this time.

I apologise for the length and detail included in this letter but hope you can appreciate the need to communicate as clearly and with as much detail as possible at this time.

We are very much looking forward to welcoming our students back to school from 8 March 2021. If there are queries regarding the plans, please do not hesitate to contact school.

Yours sincerely

Mr Andrew J Knowles
Headteacher