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Ref: AGi/LT

26 February 2021

Dear parents

As you will probably have heard in the press, the government has announced that all schools will be reopening from the week beginning Monday 8 March. You will also be aware that schools are expected to carry out three Lateral Flow Covid tests (LFTs) within the first two weeks of the return to school, with students able to return to lessons once they have received an initial negative test result. As you can imagine, this is a significant logistical exercise alongside the reopening of the school for students.

Our plan is for the school to reopen to KS4 students (Years 10 and 11) on Wednesday 10 March and for all others on Thursday 11 March. Key Worker bubbles will continue for all years on Monday and Tuesday, and for Years 7-9 on Wednesday. If you have been loaned IT equipment this can remain at home for now. We will give you notice of when this should be returned but this is likely to be May at the earliest.

Initial LFTs for registered students will be conducted for:

- Years 10 and 11 on Monday 8 March
- Years 7 and 9 on Tuesday 9 March
- Year 8 on Wednesday 10 March

There will be a booking system in place for each year group, using the Parents Evening Booking System, and you will be sent the appropriate link and instructions for this on Monday 1 March. Students must only be on site for their appointment on these days, and must then return immediately back to their home – the national lockdown is still in place. They may be accompanied by one adult to the school but must not travel in friendship groups. The testing should take around 5 minutes, and will take place in the gym, with a clearly signed one-way circuit between the top car park by the main road and the gym. The remaining tests will take place within the normal school day with a period of 3-5 days between each test.

Following the three in-school tests, the government has set up a home-testing approach going forward. Further information regarding this will be provided in due course. Parental consent is required for both the in-school and home testing programmes and **we require all parents to complete the following survey to confirm or refuse consent for both programmes of testing (including those in Key Worker bubbles as there are some changes for the new testing)**. Please read the accompanying material (an additional letter of information, FAQs for parents, guidance for how to take the test and Data Protection information) before completing the survey at <https://forms.gle/N9QRqq2N9QyjCxqWA> as soon as possible. No testing can be carried out if consent has not been given.

In order to accommodate this massive undertaking, we will be suspending the majority of live lessons from the end of Friday 5 March. Live lessons will continue up to and including Friday 5 March. Following that, from Monday 8 March while students remain at home other than for their initial test appointment. There will be a live tutor session each morning at 8.30am only. For all subject lessons, work will be set by teachers on Google Classroom including a variety of tasks working from the Knowledge Organisers, the textbooks recently collected from school and online resources.

Full return to school

When students return to school fully, they are expected to wear the full and normal school uniform. An outline reminder of this has been included with this letter. The school day will operate in the same way as it operated before Christmas to remain Covid safe. The one-way system will remain, alongside regular handwashing, year group student bubbles, staggered breaks and lunches and maintaining social distancing when possible.

Please note that the guidance from the government on wearing facemasks now includes the wearing of facemasks in the classroom. Please ensure that your child has a clean facemask each day and understands the correct way to wear and remove it. We also require proper facemasks from now on: buffs, scarves and other face coverings are no longer acceptable.

The usual expectations for full school attendance from each year group's designated return date have also been reinstated by the Department for Education, other than for students who are required to shield or to isolate due to contact with someone who has tested positive for Covid. As such, please ensure that you contact the Attendance Officer as soon as possible if either of these apply to your child.

Upcoming Events

Year 11 students have engaged particularly well during school closure and should remain confident in their abilities and the work they have completed so far. The government announced on Thursday 25 February how this year's GCSE grades will be awarded. We will write to Year 11 separately regarding this announcement before schools return, but we have a Parents' Evening planned for Tuesday 23 March, where parents can discuss their child's progress with each subject teacher.

The Year 9 Future Choices programme has also been launched this week and, in a change to our previously published date following the new return-to-school dates, the Year 9 Parents' Evening will now take place on Thursday 18 March. Further details for booking appointments will be shared with Year 9 parents next week.

We are looking forward to seeing all the students face-to-face again and restarting our extra-curricular sporting programme, amongst our other day-to-day activities. Please don't hesitate to contact us if you have any questions regarding any of the information in this letter.

Yours sincerely

Mrs A Gibbins
Head of School