

25 February 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

I do hope that you have managed, under the circumstances, to have a restful and enjoyable half term break.

You will, no doubt, have seen the Prime Minister's address to the nation, outlining the 'roadmap' to moving the country out of national lockdown. We were particularly heartened to hear that schools would be reopening from Monday 8 March; we are so looking forward to welcoming our students back into our schools once more. You can see the latest guidance from the Department of Education here <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak>.

I wanted to write to you to set out our initial plans for reintroducing our students into schools. The DfE has stated that **school attendance will be mandatory for all students** from Monday 8 March and that **schools will have discretion on how to phase the return of students over that week** to allow them to be tested on return. We will continue to take a measured approach to ensure that all members of our school community are kept safe.

After an initial programme of three tests in school, students will be provided with two rapid tests to use each week at home. You will need to provide consent for your child to be tested in school and you can do this by completing our consent form <https://johnwillmottschool.co.uk/covid-testing-consent-form/>.

You will need to complete this form for each child (if you have more than one child at the school, you will need to fill in one for each sibling). We will need to plan carefully for this testing, so this form needs to be completed by the deadline of **Monday 1 March 2021 at 12:00pm**.

Clinically vulnerable staff and students

The latest guidance is that Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV) staff and students should be supported to work remotely and should not attend school at present. We have previously contacted parents and carers of any CEV students and discussed their needs. Please contact us directly if you have concerns and you have not already spoken to a member of staff.

Face coverings

On their return, students will be expected to wear face coverings when moving around the site and in corridors as they had been before the lockdown. **In addition, the DfE have stated that face coverings should be worn in classrooms.** This will not apply in situations where wearing a face covering would impact on the ability to take part in exercise, for example in PE lessons. This means that students will continue to wear a clean, washable face covering on their return to school.

Uniform and appropriate clothing on cold days

To reflect the updated guidance, teachers will continue to ensure that their classrooms have good airflow and ventilation to reduce the risk of transmission. On cold days, students should be reminded to wear suitable layers of clothing (e.g., base layers under uniform and a school jumper). **Please note that all students will be expected to attend school in full uniform.**

I know that some families will feel anxious about the return to school. Please be reassured that the safety of our young people and staff is of paramount importance and our robust risk assessments are regularly updated and reviewed to reflect the latest guidance. Since the start of term, we have responded immediately to any identified positive cases or any children or staff with symptoms to reduce the risk of transmission. We continue to use a robust procedure to identify contacts and move quickly to ensure that close contacts are sent home to isolate.

In order to facilitate the safe return to schools and, in keeping with the DfE's suggestion that we can use discretion to support our wider reopening, we will be operating a staggered start from March 8 to ensure that all students receive the necessary test. These details will be confirmed towards the end of next week once we have received parental consent for testing and we know the numbers of students who need to be tested before returning to lessons.

Your support and cooperation is valued and we are looking forward to welcoming students back to school – where they belong.

Yours faithfully

Mrs T Peters
Headteacher