



Dear Parents and Carers

As you will be aware, government announcements yesterday gave further detail on when schools will be able to reopen to all students.

Schools can reopen from 8 March. Secondary schools have been asked to carry out Lateral Flow Device testing (LFD) for coronavirus as students return, and will need to stagger the return dates of year groups to facilitate this. We are now making plans for how this will work and I will write again soon with specific details of when each year group can return. Students will continue to work online until that point.

We will offer students three LFD tests during their first fortnight back at school. The first will be on the day of their return, and then the subsequent tests will be three to five days apart. Students will be provided with a home testing kit to carry out a fourth test. The government then intends to provide home testing kits so that students can test twice weekly at home.

The in-school LFD testing for Years 7-11 requires parental consent. Students in the Sixth Form need to give consent themselves. Students swab themselves, in a screened booth, with a mirror, and with support from trained staff only if required. We then process the test. Booths are thoroughly cleaned between uses and hygiene is paramount in our testing centre. It is a very quick process: under a minute to take a swab and then 30 minutes processing time. If you have not already done so, please indicate your consent for testing using this link: <https://forms.gle/WaoM55NTxxv8Dn9g6>. Please do not use this link for sixth form students as they must give their own consent using the details that have been emailed directly to their college email addresses. Please return consent by Monday 1 March to allow us the time we need to schedule testing.

The other main change in yesterday's guidance is the expectation that staff and students wear face masks in the classroom. Until now, masks have only been required in corridors and busy communal areas. (PE lessons will be exempt from this.) The guidance states that this is a short term measure and will be reviewed at Easter. I know this will be unpopular with some and welcomed by others but I am hopeful that if infection rates continue to fall, this measure will not be needed for long. Please do ensure that your child has an adequate supply of face masks so that they can change masks if they become damp from extended wearing, and they can wear a clean mask daily.

We will continue to implement other control measures as previously. These include regular hand sanitising/washing, increased ventilation, staggered breaks and lunches, increased cleaning and the use of segregated 'bubbles' to limit infection.

I understand that it is tempting for some to regard schools reopening as the end of 'lockdown'. However, it is really important that we do not take this approach. If young people and their families extend contacts outside of school, this will lead to increased rates of Covid coming into school, which jeopardises schools staying open. It is vital that we are all patient, and continue to stay at home except for the permitted reasons, even once children are back in school. This is our best chance of keeping rates moving downwards, and ending lockdown once and for all.

I will write again with specific details of return dates and times as soon as possible. Thank you for your ongoing support. We are very much looking forward to being able to welcome your children back to school.

Best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Newton', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**Alex Newton**  
**Principal**