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Head of School: Chris Eccles

Friday 26th February 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

I am very excited to report that following the announcement from the Prime Minister on Monday 22nd February, schools will begin to reopen to all pupils from Monday 8th March. Our pupils and staff have done a fantastic job with blended learning, however there is no substitute for being in school, learning alongside other people and developing not only knowledge and skills, but also developing social and interpersonal skills.

There is a lot of information in this letter. Please take some time to read it very carefully, as I set out how the school and its community will manage the next few weeks.

We have been advised by the government that before pupils can return to school they should undergo a rapid asymptomatic Lateral Flow test. This is a test that pupils administer themselves under supervision in school. In total, pupils will be asked to take three of these tests over a two week period. Rapid asymptomatic testing is a tool to reduce the spread of the virus and break the chain of transmission. This will allow us to operate as safely as possible by identifying those who need to self-isolate. The lateral flow tests are most effective when used frequently and used in conjunction with hands, face and space control measures.

Pupils will undergo three tests in school in the first instance, spaced three to five days apart. These will be carried out in phases, with pupils having to complete the first test before attending school. In the updated guidance released by the Department for Education on Wednesday 24th February, schools were advised that they are able to commence testing before pupils officially start to return from 8th March. At Oakwood we are committed to getting pupils into school as quickly and safely as possible and therefore will begin our testing programme from Thursday 4th March.

Since January we have had an Asymptomatic Testing Site (ATS) set up in school for staff and the limited number of pupils who have been attending. With the fantastic support of volunteers from our community, we are able to double our testing capacity to reduce the time pupils need to wait to return to school. To ensure all pupils are back in school as close to the 8th March as possible, we have put together a testing programme, with pupils allocated time slots in tutor groups. Below is the programme for testing Year 8 to 11 on Thursday 4th and Friday 5th March.

Pupils should attend at the time allocated to their tutor group. Access to the test centre is via the Perform entrance where they will be directed to the Main Hall. It is important that pupils arrive on time to allow the day to run smoothly. Once they have had their test they will exit the hall via the fire exit and return home. In the morning or afternoon when their test is scheduled, they will not be expected to sign in to blended learning. Pupils will be expected to complete blended learning at all other times, as usual. .

A member of the Inspire Trust



Registered in England: 08775996

For testing in school to take place we do require parental consent. I would like to thank all of you who have already provided this. If you have not yet done so, please follow the link below. To support us with planning, you will need to **complete this by Wednesday 3rd March**.

[CONSENT FORM](#)

Testing Timetable

Pupils should arrive at school on time, but no more than 5 minutes before their appointment time and enter via the Perform entrance (where they queue for PE). They do not need to wear uniform, but face coverings must be worn in the building and social distancing adhered to. After their tests, they return home.

Pupils should **not** attend a test if they are having to self-isolate following a positive Covid test, if they live with someone who has recently tested positive or if they have had a positive test result within the last 90 days. In addition, they should not attend if they have one or more of the main Covid symptoms:

- high temperature – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature);
- new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual);
- loss or change to your sense of smell or taste – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal.

Thursday 4th March			
Year 9 - Morning Session		Year 11 - Afternoon Session	
8.30	CWI	11.30	SFL
8.45	PCA	11.45	HLI
9.00	TWO	12.00	HPA
9.15	KBO	12.15	TDA
9.30	SCU	12.30	LME
9.45	FMA	12.45	MBA
10.00	LTA	13.00	NFR
10.15	KWI	13.15	SCU

Friday 5th March			
Year 8 - Morning Session		Year 10 - Afternoon Session	
8.30	KLA	11.30	ATI
8.45	TGI	11.45	EHL
9.00	GFI	12.00	ASE
9.15	APA	12.15	SKH
9.30	LCA	12.30	VTI
9.45	SFI	12.45	LPO
10.00	RCH	13.00	VHO
10.15	HIQ	13.15	JBR

Pupils who have a positive test result will be asked to isolate for 10 days, as per government guidance, we will contact you in this instance. They will return to school following this period of isolation.

Year 7 - Monday 8th March

On Monday 8th March pupils in Year 7 should arrive at school at 8.30am. They should come in uniform and on arrival at their usual entrance (the doors at the front of school) should head to the Sports Hall. There they will be asked to sit at desks 2m apart in their tutor groups. Pupils must wear a mask when they are inside the building.

Registration will start at 8.40am with their tutor. They will then be taken in groups to have their tests in the Main Hall. In the meantime, pupils waiting for their tests or their tests results will be doing their blended learning under supervision in the Sports Hall. Once a pupil's test result has returned negative, they will go to their normal classroom to continue the lesson with their usual class-teacher. Pupils who test positive will be asked to go to pupil reception and arrangements for their collection will be made.

Year 7 pupils whose parents or carers have not given consent for them to have a test must not attend school at 8.30am, but arrive later at 12.20pm. Testing is voluntary, however, we would encourage everyone to participate in the asymptomatic testing programme to help break transmission links by identifying those who may be carrying the virus unknowingly.

Pupils of critical workers and those identified as requiring in-school provision should also attend as normal; they will have their tests with their year groups whilst in school.

All other pupils in Years 8 to 11 on Monday 8th March will have a final day of blended learning at home.

Tuesday 9th March - all pupils return to school

As normal, pupils should arrive at school by 8.30am for an 8.40am tutor start. They must enter using the entrance they have been using since September and go their year group meeting points They must wear a face mask.

Year Group	Before 8.00am	8.00-8.30am Entrance	Designated meeting area	From 8.30am
7	Pupils can go to the Dining Room and enter the school through pupil entrance. At 8.00am pupils in Years 8,9,10,11 move to their designated areas. Y7 will remain in the Dining Room.	Main pupil entrance (gate off Lawton Lane)	Dining room	Staggered move to Tutor Room directed by staff on duty
8		Pupil entrance steps	Sports Hall (fire exit)	
9		Perform gate	Sports Hall (Perform corridor)	
10		Pupil entrance steps	Canopy area	
11		Perform gate	Main Hall	

Pupils will be expected to be in **full school uniform** and have their own face coverings.

Face Masks

In light of this week's government announcement and the tightening of restrictions to reduce the spread of COVID 19, face masks will need to be worn in all indoor communal areas where social distancing cannot be guaranteed, this **includes classrooms during lessons** up until Easter.

Face masks **must** also continue to be worn on corridors, during changeover periods and should be worn in other communal indoor areas, unless pupils are sat down and eating. The mask must be a specifically designed face covering that covers the mouth and nose; the wearing of masks with inappropriate or offensive logos or designs, bandanas, scarves or other homemade face-coverings will not be permitted in any circumstances. The mask must be either of the cloth variety or disposable, although we recommend that as they will be wearing them for longer periods of time to use a cloth reusable one that is washed regularly. We are currently looking at ways of providing pupils with periodic mask breaks during a lesson, to help them wear them for longer periods. Failure to comply with this will be dealt with using the school's usual behaviour policy. Pupils will also need to take responsibility for the safe removal and storage of their face masks.

This involves:

- cleaning of hands before and after touching - including to remove or put them on;
- safe storage of them in individual, sealable plastic bags between use;
- washing reusable masks daily.

Pupils should consider bringing a spare face covering to wear if theirs becomes damp during the day.

Pupils should remember to:

- not to touch the front of their face covering during use or when removing it;
- dispose of temporary face coverings in a 'black bag' waste bin (not recycling bin);
- place reusable face coverings in a plastic bag they can take home with them;
- wash their hands again before heading to their classroom.

All the other infection control measures that we had before the lockdown to reduce the spread of the virus will remain in place, these include:

- designated entrances and meeting areas at the start of the day for year group bubbles;
- one way system around school;
- split breaks;
- hand sanitising at the start and end of lessons;
- wiping down desks and chairs at the end of lessons;
- staggered finish to the school day.

These, coupled with effective contact tracing and the wearing of a face mask helped significantly reduce the number of positive cases and subsequent transmission in school. We hope with everyone's support and vigilance, we will be able to maintain these standards of safety when we all return on 9th March.

Continued and Home Testing

To provide us all with another layer of protection and to allow us to move out of lockdown we will, inline with the government's guidance, administer three tests in school. This is, in part, to ensure that pupils are familiar with the testing process. Testing for each year group will continue in school time as outlined in the timetable below. On these occasions, pupils will attend school normally and be taken from their lessons during the day for their test.

After the third test, each pupil will receive a home testing kit that contains seven rounds of testing and a letter explaining when and how the test should be carried out. The home testing programme is aimed at allowing schools to focus on the core business of education, whilst ensuring that the protection provided by mass rapid asymptomatic testing is maintained, as we move through the phases of the government's route map out of restrictions. More information on this will be provided closer to the time.

Day/ Date	Year	Test number
Tuesday 9th March	9 & 11	2
Wednesday 10th March	8 & 10	2
Thursday 11th March	7	2
Friday 12th March	9 & 11	3 Issued with home test kits

Monday 15th March	8 & 10	3 Issued with home test kits
Tuesday 16th March	7	3 Issued with home test kits

Is anyone exempt from testing?

Testing is voluntary; however, as I have already mentioned I would encourage everyone to participate in the asymptomatic testing programme to help break transmission links by identifying those who may be carrying the virus unknowingly. We can all do our part to stop the spread of the virus.

However, pupils who have tested positive for COVID in the last 90 days do not have to take a test. They can elect to be tested, however, if they have a positive result they will have to isolate and take a PCR test.

Our Recovery Programme

Pupils have now been away from school for over ten weeks. In this time, learning has continued through our blended learning programme. We are happy and confident that for many pupils they will have continued to learn, albeit in a different way.

When we returned in September, I outlined four pillars of recovery that as a school we felt were important.

- Relationships - rebuilding and reconnecting with friends and staff as a community.
- Re-engagement - with learning in a collaborative, interactive environment. Doing activities that have been missed, such as sports, music, dance, drama and practical work in Create lessons to give just a few examples.
- Routines - reestablish the routine of the school day, lessons, expectations, doing well and getting rewarded.
- Resetting the curriculum. Once again pupils have taken a detour in their learning. On this occasion, due to the success of blended learning, many more pupils have been on the same journey. However, on their return we need to look at where we adapt the curriculum, what we need to learn next and what we might have to go back to.

Tips for good mental health and well-being

There is no doubt, no matter how resilient we are, the last few months, not to mention the last year, have tested all of us. As we look forward to welcoming all our pupils back to school, it is important to remember that the most effective learning and progress take place when pupils are mentally strong.

Youth Mental Health Ambassador, Dr Alex George has shared his 'top five tips' for young people's good mental health and wellbeing. This is live on the Department for Education's [YouTube channel](#).

He has given advice to young people on how to improve their mood and look after themselves by eating well and getting plenty of sleep and natural light during the daytime.

As an Accident & Emergency doctor, Dr Alex will use his clinical expertise to champion and shape government work to improve support for young people in schools, colleges and universities, as well as his personal experience having lost his brother to suicide last year. He will also sit on the new Mental Health in Education Action Group, which will focus on how to support young people's wellbeing when they return to school.

The Department for Education has updated the guidance for [parents to support their children's remote education](#) to provide more information for parents and carers as they support their children at home.

They have added top tips for supporting children during remote education, including links to information about the Reading Well book list that supports mental health. We have also provided information on how to access online resources and services through your local library and online [support for parents and carers to keep children and young people safe from online harm](#).

We are very excited about the return to school in the coming weeks. There is still a lot to do and everyone's support and engagement with both the mass testing programme and the additional wearing of face masks for the weeks leading up to Easter will be very much appreciated. We hope that, not only is this the last lockdown, but also as we head into the summer, we can see a return to pupils enjoying the wider aspects of school life, such as after school activities, social events and reward celebrations.

Once again, can I thank you all for your unwavering support during this extremely challenging period. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours faithfully,

Mr C Eccles - Head of School