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February 26th 2021

Dear students, parents and carers

Return to school!

I am very pleased to be able to write to you with details of our return to school plans. We are all looking forward to having you back in school! You will have seen lots of information and comment in the media following a number of government announcements this week and we have been working together in school at leadership and Director level to agree a plan to bring everyone back as quickly and safely as possible. Please read this letter carefully so that you are clear about the arrangements. I will be writing separately to Years 10 and 11 about exam arrangements, so they are not covered here.

Friday 5th March

All staff will be in school to be tested and to meet together for training on self-testing and covid regulations. There will be no live online lessons on this day - work will be set for all year groups and students can also use the time to catch up ready to come back to school.

Phased return from Monday 8th March

We will be operating a phased return for all students. This is to allow us to test students on their first day back as per government instructions, and to ensure the safe daily operation of the school. After careful consideration, we have decided to have our youngest students back first, adding one year group per day until we are all at school on Friday 12th March.

Monday 8th March	Year 7 ONLY
Tuesday 9th March	Years 7 & 8
Wednesday 10th March	Years 7, 8 & 9
Thursday 11th March	Years 7,8,9 & 10
Friday 12th March	Years 7,8,9,10 & 11

Please note: we do not expect key worker children to be in school from March 8th unless the rest of their year group is in school too. Please contact school if you need to discuss this further.

Important points to note:

- School transport will run as normal from Monday 8th March, as will private arrangements (eg Yeomans bus from Hereford). Face masks must be worn on the bus.
- The normal school timetable will operate from Monday 8th March, so students need their books, PE kit etc. Don't forget your face mask and hand sanitiser!
- The current online timetable of live lessons will continue to run for students who have not yet returned to school until (and including) **Wednesday 10th March**. Thursday 11th March will be work set and 'catch up' for Year 11 students, ready for their return on Friday 12th March
- Normal school uniform rules apply. Remember a base layer under polo shirts if needed - we will be ventilating classrooms and students will be outside at break and lunch
- ALL students will need to bring a packed lunch on their first day back; we will then put the lunch ordering system in place from the following day
- All students who have borrowed a laptop will need to bring it back on their first day back.
- We will be operating 'year group bubbles' as previously and all our hygiene rules will still apply - hand sanitising and chair / desk cleaning at the end of every lesson; an additional cleaning routine from site staff and so on.
- The government has changed its guidance on face masks and now expects them to be worn as much as possible. Our expectation is that face masks will normally be worn at all times by staff and students if social distancing is not possible; we will make an exception if students are outside at break or lunch and are socially distanced, and for some lessons where it is appropriate eg PE. When staff are teaching it is particularly important for some students to be able to see facial expressions and lip movement, so staff may not wear masks for some lessons where they are able to be a sufficient distance away from students.

Testing arrangements

There is a document attached to the end of this letter based on information from the DfE which outlines the reasons for mass testing in schools. Schools have been asked to complete 3 tests ideally within a two week period. We do not yet know how many students we will be testing or how long it will actually take, so at present we are planning to test each student once per week. We have discussed this with Public Health, who are happy with this approach. It may be that we can speed up the testing; we will see how the first week goes!

- **No child will be 'made' to test**
- **No child will be tested without parental consent (Students who are already 16 can give consent themselves if necessary)**
- **No child will be prevented from attending school or participating in any activity if they have not been tested**

The easiest and quickest way for us to collect parental consent is for you to click the link below and complete the form. **Please complete a separate form for each of your children; there is a 'no consent' option so that we have a return for every child please.**

Please return the form as soon as possible and no later than next Wednesday 3rd March.

<https://forms.gle/NDnoKNYzk6rLH8KJA>

I am also attaching a diagram to this email showing the testing process. It is very straightforward and quick, and not nearly as bad as many people expect! Each child will rub a soft swab against the back of their throat, and gently up one nostril, then a member of staff will put the swab into some special fluid which will then be tested to see if Covid is present. We will only be informing parents of the outcome if the test is positive, at which point you will need to arrange a PCR test externally (more details on the attached information).

Wellbeing

I know how much staff and students are looking forward to coming back to school (not to mention the vast majority of parents and carers!). We will do our best to establish 'normal' routines and expectations in school and would ask you to support us by doing the same at home. We are very mindful of both the general anxieties and specific difficulties that some staff, students and their families have faced during lockdown and we have plans to address mental health and wellbeing for all our staff and students in as many ways as we can to best meet their needs. Being together, following the school routine and regular bedtimes will help a lot (and that's just the staff!).

I hope that it will not be long before we really can say we are 'back to normal'. Most of our students have worked very hard over lockdown, so we do not have major concerns about them 'being behind' (whatever that means) or not able to achieve their very best. We will be looking at every child's performance by Easter to identify anyone whom we feel would benefit from some additional support academically, socially or emotionally so that we can act quickly and put that in place for the summer term. Our core purpose remains teaching and learning, and we owe it to our children and their futures to make sure we are doing that to the highest standards.

There is much to look forward to! As the weather improves and lockdown is gradually lifted, the staff and I look forward to meeting more parents and carers and seeing lots of happy students.

Please get in touch if you need any clarification about any of the information in this letter.

Best wishes



Sue Gaston
Head Teacher

NHS Test and Trace: COVID-19 testing students

As you know, we are continuing to work to keep Fairfield as safe as possible and in line with government expectations, we are now going to be conducting testing in schools, using the quicker COVID-19 tests known as 'lateral flow tests'. Up to one third of people who have coronavirus experience no symptoms at all and it is the government's hope that this testing will help to stop the virus spread.

The test is voluntary and no student will be forced to take it. Please find enclosed an instructional leaflet from the NHS with some more information that you may find useful.

We will be testing students who want to participate from March 8th 2021. Students will be tested three times over a 2-3 week period. The taking of the test will be supervised by staff but students will be expected to administer the test themselves. The 'lateral flow' tests take a swab from the nose and throat.

Results are given in 30 minutes from the time of the test and will be shared directly with students participating.

Negative test results:

Students with negative test results will be able to stay in school and resume lessons as normal.

Positive test results:

Students with positive test results will be directly informed and parents/carers will be notified. Parents/carers should collect the student from school immediately in line with our previous guidance.

Parents/carers will need to ensure that the student takes a 'PCR test' at a local or regional testing site on the same day (or as soon as possible). Visit <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test> or phone 119 to book a test. Whilst waiting for the PCR result (via text / email), students will need to self-isolate at home.

If the PCR test returns a positive result, the student will have to continue to self-isolate and follow the guidance given from NHS Test and Trace.

A close contact of someone in school who has tested positive for COVID-19 will need to self-isolate in the usual way as per the national guidelines. We will inform you if this arises.

Development of coronavirus symptoms:

It is important to be aware that the testing programme at school is for people with **no symptoms** only. If your child develops symptoms at any time (such as a high temperature; a new, continuous cough; or a loss or change to their smell or taste), they should self-isolate and book a test by calling 119 or visiting <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>