

25<sup>th</sup> February 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

### Coronavirus Update 36

#### Introduction

The decision that schools should reopen to all of their students in the week beginning 8<sup>th</sup> March has met with general relief. Almost all families, students and teachers will be pleased to be working on site once again.

This relief, however, has to be blended with caution. Even locally, infection rates continue to be high. The reopening of the High School to everyone and the degree of mixing that it involves, comes with a package of measures to reduce the inevitable increase in risks.

#### Training Day: Friday 5<sup>th</sup> March

Today's announcement of the national scheme for assessing the 2021 A level and GCSE grades makes it possible to schedule our long-delayed training day for staff. This will be on Friday, 5<sup>th</sup> March. There will be no teaching online that day and the school will be closed to all students.

#### Testing

The first of the measures to reduce risks is testing. We are required to offer three lateral flow tests to every student starting from 8<sup>th</sup> March. Testing on this scale is a big operation and I am pleased that the Leisure Centre is allowing us to set up our main test centre in their spacious facilities. There will also be a smaller centre on our own site in the former caretaker's bungalow.

Our plan is to offer the first test to one year group on one day and resume teaching those students in classrooms the next day. This will be the schedule for the week. You will see that on the day of a year group's first test they will have no teaching either online or in school.

	Monday 8 <sup>th</sup> March	Tuesday 9 <sup>th</sup> March	Wednesday 10 <sup>th</sup> March	Thursday 11 <sup>th</sup> March	Friday 12 <sup>th</sup> March
Year 12/13	T	FTA	FTA	FTA	FTA
Year 11	T	FTA	FTA	FTA	FTA
Year 10	O/L	T	FTA	FTA	FTA
Year 9	O/L	O/L	T	FTA	FTA
Year 8	O/L	O/L	O/L	T	FTA

#### Key

**T = Test (Online learning cancelled)**

**O/L = Online Learning**

**FTA = Full Time Attendance**

Within each year group there will be a set of appointment times. I will notify you of these in the coming days, together with information about the testing process and an opportunity for you to give or withhold consent.

### **Face Masks**

During the pandemic we have all become used to the practice of social distancing. Remaining at least 2 metres away from other people has become almost a habit. Many of our classrooms and teaching spaces do not allow anything like this degree of social distancing. We are therefore, as the government recommends, requiring students to wear face coverings in the great majority of our classrooms. Staff will do the same whenever the situation brings them within 2 metres of their students. In corridors and stair ways the previous requirement for face coverings will continue.

### **GCSE and A-level examinations**

The Government is announcing its plan this morning. This is of course of intense interest to all concerned. We at the school need time to work through all the implications of the new scheme and our training day on Friday, 5<sup>th</sup> March will be part of that process. I will write a separate letter about the detailed arrangements for our own candidates once they have been decided.

### **Other Arrangements**

In all other respects school life will be very much as it was when we were last fully open in December. The arrangements for transport, zones, catering, uniform and the timing of the school day will be unchanged.

We trust that these measures, taken together, will be sufficient to achieve what every one of us wishes to see: a return to teaching and learning that is not only effective but safe.

With my good wishes,

Yours sincerely,



Natalie Waters