

5th March, 2021



Dear Parent/Carer

Coronavirus Update 49

Welcome to another of our weekly updates – at the end of a week in which our main focus has been making sure everything is ready for full re-opening on Monday. I, for one, can't wait to welcome our students back onsite – school has felt very empty these last 2½ months! But of course the main reason we're looking forward to seeing all the students again is that *teaching, and pastoral care, is much more effective when it's face-to-face*. We've worked hard to ensure live lessons work as well as possible, but you can't beat being in the same classroom together (providing, as always, it's safe).

Over the next few pages I'll run through the main points you need to know about how things will work next week.

Wider reopening

- We're looking forward to welcoming students in Years 7, 8, 10, 11, 12 and 13 back onsite for face-to-face lessons in school on Monday 8th March. Timings for the day will be the same as last term – *ie* Year 11 lessons will start at 8:35am.
- We're also looking forward to welcoming students in Year 9 whose parents have consented to their being Covid-tested back onsite. These students will have their first Lateral Flow test on Monday 8th, as outlined below – please note the time these students should report to school, as it's quite a bit earlier than usual for Year 9 on Mondays! Students whose parents have not consented should remain at home and access remote learning for Learning for Life and PE. Students who have been tested can also access this learning at home – they should return home after their morning test.
- Key worker and vulnerable students in Year 9 may stay on site once they have been tested; Mr Harrison will supervise this group for the remainder of the day.
- All students coming onsite should wear their normal school uniform. Please don't forget a face-mask...

Face-masks

As previously announced, in line with Government recommendations we now expect students to wear a face-mask in the classroom as well as on the corridors – although some students are exempt from wearing them (see [here](#)). Such students are encouraged to wear a badge, available from the school office or from the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities team, to signify they are exempt.

I appreciate that a small number of parents have genuine concerns about their children wearing face-masks in school. If you feel it is inappropriate for your son or daughter to wear a face mask, please write a letter to confirm that this is the case; if your son or daughter is challenged about not wearing a face-mask, the member of staff in question will not take any further action if such a letter is then produced. Alternatively your son or daughter could wear an 'exempt' badge – please let the school office (or the SEND team) know if you would prefer this to happen.

Please ensure your son/daughter brings a fresh face-mask into school every day. As ever, thank you for your co-operation.

Coronavirus testing

At present, over 60% of students have parental consent to be tested. Thank you if you've completed your form – the more students that are tested, the safer it is for everyone.

I'm delighted to report that the first round of testing today has gone well. The team from the Local Authority have been very efficient and at the time of writing, we've not had any positive test results. (Late addition – one positive test result has just been notified to us).

Testing will continue for students in Years 7, 8 and 9 next week. As published in last week's *Update*, consented students in Years 7, 8 and 9 will be tested on Monday 8th March according to the following schedule:

Time	Students	
9:00am to 9:30am	Year 9 students	Boys whose surnames start 'A', 'B', 'C', 'D', 'E', 'F' or 'G'
9:30am to 10:00am		Boys whose surnames start 'H', 'I', 'J', 'K', 'L', 'M' or 'N'
10:00am to 10:30am		Boys whose surnames start 'O', 'P', 'R', 'S', 'T', 'V', 'W' or 'Y'
11:10am to 1:00pm	Year 7 students	Boys will be taken out of their lessons to be tested
1:25pm onwards	Year 8 students	Boys will be taken out of their lessons to be tested

Most Year 9 students will only be onsite for their tests that day, as outlined above.

Students should be offered three tests as they come back to school. We're currently reviewing whether the second and third tests should be carried out on students' short days, or whether it would be better to invite the Local Authority team back in and attempt to test every student in a day. If we opt for the latter, it's likely the second round of testing will take place in the latter part of next week, and the third round in the early part of the week beginning Monday 15th March. We'll send a message to confirm the plans once we've had chance to reflect on how today has gone.

Year 11 and Year 13 Exams

We are expecting more information from the Exam Boards shortly about the process we need to follow for the award of external exam grades this year. In the interim, the following information has been taken from the website of one Board.

“Teachers will be able to draw on a range of evidence when determining GCSE and A level grades, including the optional use of questions provided by exam boards, as well as mock exams, coursework, or other work completed as part of a pupil's course, such as essays or in-class tests.

- *Teachers will receive guidance and optional groups of GCSE and AS/A level questions from exam boards to support them in determining grades*
- *Teachers will submit grades to exam boards by 18th June, allowing as much teaching time as possible before teachers make their assessments.*
- *To support teachers in making their judgements, exam boards will provide detailed guidance before the end of the spring term.*
- *Students studying vocational qualifications that are taught alongside GCSEs and A levels on one or two year courses, will also receive grades assessed by teachers rather than sitting exams.*

- *Results days for GCSE, A level and some vocational qualifications will take place in the week of 9th August.*
- *Students should continue to work on any non-exam assessments, such as coursework. Coursework will be marked by teachers and will contribute to the overall grade, whether or not it has been completed.*

Exam boards will be releasing more guidance by the end of March about the Quality assurance process, how it will operate and what it will mean for schools. Further guidance about the Appeals process, will be released by exam boards at the end of April.”

Livestreaming

Dr Silverstone writes:

“While this week is the final time I’ll be sharing information from [Thinkuknow](#), please remember that there is a wealth of information on their website that I have not covered in my recent posts. It is well worth a browse if you haven’t already done so.

*“This week’s first topic is **livestreaming**. Live streaming is now a very popular feature of many apps and platforms, and all you need to livestream is an internet enabled device like a laptop or a smart phone. Over the past few months, many of you may have watched a livestream, or taken part in a video chat. Livestreaming can be a fun and enjoyable online activity for young people. If your child enjoys livestreaming, you may want to read [what is livestreaming](#) to find out more about it and help your child have a positive online experience. There is more information about it, including a discussion of the risks and safe use here also: you can watch this [video](#) or download this [handy guide](#).*

“Next, I’d like to share more steps you can take to help keep your child safe online.

- ***Make sure they know about NCA CEOP:*** *Young people can report a concern about grooming or sexual abuse to NCA CEOP at <https://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre/> and get support from a specialist Child Protection Advisor.*
- ***Talk about how their online actions can affect others:*** *If your child is engaging with peers online, remind them to consider how someone else might feel before they post or share something. If they are considering sharing a photo/video of somebody else, they should always ask permission first.*
- ***And finally, tell them about Thinkuknow:*** *their websites provide open and honest guidance for young people on friends, relationships and the internet, covering topics like dealing with pressure; consent; and getting support when you’re worried. Visit our [website for 11-13's](#) or our [website for 14+](#) for age appropriate information.”*

Finally...

With so many more details about the rest of the school year still to be announced (I don’t have anything to report on summer schools yet, for instance), I intend to keep sending Friday *Updates* home for the foreseeable future. Next week I hope to be able to report on a successful first week back in school! Until then, do stay safe, and enjoy a restful weekend if you’re able to do so.

Yours faithfully



Stephen Brierley
Principal.