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Roding Valley
HIGH SCHOOL

Friday 26th February 2021

Dear Parents/Carers,

School procedures for re-opening from 8th March 2021

As I am sure you are aware there is a significant amount of information I need to provide you with; I hope this letter gives you clarity on our return to school following the Prime Minister's announcement that schools will begin to reopen on Monday 8th March. Mass testing of students is an integral part of that plan laid down by the government. Please note that I will be sending further clarity for our Year 11 and 13's families regarding examinations once we have assimilated the information we have been provided. I believe this document from Ofqual may help your understanding. Please click [here](#) to view this document.

Testing and Reopening Plans

The Department for Education (DfE) guidance stipulates that three lateral flow tests (LFT) are required for those students who provide consent, before moving to home testing. This is so students have undertaken some testing in a supervised setting and have had the chance to familiarise themselves with self-swabbing.

In addition, it is a requirement for these students to secure a negative test result before they can recommence onsite education. The Government has told schools to stagger their start for students to allow for the logistical challenge of testing up to 1400 students and all the staff three times within a 15-day period.

We have been working with Essex County Council this week who have been discussing plans with the DfE to support schools across the region with the testing process. The County Council have now put in place community testing to allow schools to reduce the number of tests they need to provide before they distribute home kits to students to complete outside of school. Their rationale is as follows:

Students accessing a test before coming to school reduces the risk of transmission via public/school transport and mixing at school. Accessing a test locally negates the need to travel across the county to attend school because they can access their most local testing site.

This test is with a clinically trained individual, who assists with the test but also provides training and information regarding the swabbing, processing, and reading the result. This is a more robust method than student's trialling self-swabbing at school and then waiting 30mins for the results to be given to them. This does not give sufficient training around processing the tests or interpreting results.

Below you will see the timetable for return for all of our students. This is the suggested approach outlined by Essex County Council based on the advice of Public Health. It allows us to fulfil the requirement of the DfE of a staggered start, testing students 3-5 days apart while limiting disruption to students learning as much as possible, which would undoubtedly occur were we to complete the first test in school. **To facilitate this testing on-site, we require Year 12 and 13 students to give consent to be tested. The students can complete the form [here](#) to give consent and these are some [instructions](#) on how to use the website.** Students who do not give consent will return



to school at the same time as their peers and will not be penalised for not having a test. However, I urge families to support this testing in order to limit the spread of the virus, keep everyone in our community safe and ensure your children are in school rather than isolating at home due to close contacts with positive cases. I wanted to note that we are only able to return in this way because of the number of volunteers we have had for testing from our school community, all of whom will have received thorough training. Thank you to those who have volunteered to support the school with the testing programme, it is really appreciated.

In Summary: Timetable of Return

Date/Day	Testing	Face to face lessons on site	Remote Lessons
Thursday 4 th March	Years 10, 11,12,13 Community testing with parents	Only vulnerable and key worker provision	All Year groups
Friday 5 th March	Years 10, 11,12,13 Community testing with parents	Only vulnerable and key worker provision	All Year groups
Saturday 6 th March	Years 10, 11,12,13 Community testing with parents	n/a	n/a
Sunday 7 th March	Years 10, 11,12,13 Community testing with parents	n/a	n/a
Monday 8 th March	Years 11 and 13 LFT in school	Years 10,11,12,13	Years 7, 8, 9
Tuesday 9 th March	Years 10 and 12 LFT in school	Years 10,11,12,13	Years 7, 8, 9
Wednesday 10 th March	Absentees from Mon/Tues and staff	Years 10,11,12,13	Years 7, 8, 9
Thursday 11 th March	Years 7, 8, 9 Community testing with parents Years 11 and 13 LFT in school	Years 10,11,12,13	Years 7, 8, 9
Friday 12 th March	Years 7, 8, 9 Community testing with parents Years 10 and 12 LFT in school	Years 10,11,12,13	Year 7, 8, 9
Saturday 13 th March	Years 7,8,9 Community testing with parents	n/a	n/a

Sunday 14 th March	Years 7, 8, 9 Community testing with parents	n/a	n/a
Monday 15 th March	Years 8 and 9 LFT in school	All Year groups	n/a
Tuesday 16 th March	Year 7 LFT in school	All Year groups	n/a
Wednesday 17 th March	Absentees from Mon/Tues and staff	All Year groups	n/a
Thursday 18 th March	Year 8 and 9 LFT in school	All Year groups	n/a
Friday 19 th March	Year 7 LFT in school	All Year groups	n/a

Face Coverings

I am aware that following the Prime Minister's announcement there has been a lot of media focus on the compulsory wearing of face coverings at all times. Since the start of the school year, we have requested that all students wear face coverings in all indoor communal areas and where it was impossible to remain socially distanced. They were not previously required to wear them in the classroom unless they were asked to do so by our clinically vulnerable teachers. This has been supported fantastically by our parents and student body, for which I am very thankful; it has meant everyone in our community has felt safe and I'm sure it has helped us to limit the spread of the virus.

The Government advice on face coverings has now changed and is as follows:

*Where pupils in year 7 (which would be children who were aged 11 on 31 August 2020) and above are educated, we recommend that face coverings should be worn by adults and pupils when moving around the premises, outside of classrooms, such as in corridors and communal areas where social distancing cannot easily be maintained. Face coverings do not need to be worn by pupils when outdoors on the premises. **In addition, we now also recommend in those schools, that face covering should be worn in classrooms or during activities unless social distancing can be maintained. This does not apply in situations where wearing a face covering would impact on the ability to take part in exercise or strenuous activity, for example in PE lessons.***

On their return to school, students will be required to wear face-coverings in lessons, where social distancing measures cannot be maintained. It would only be if the teaching group was small or situated in a larger venue where social distancing could be followed, that students would not be asked to wear their face covering. Students will not need to wear face coverings in PE, anywhere outside of the school's buildings or in the playground at break times, although they can if they choose. The government has said that this situation will be reviewed at Easter.

The teachers are expected to observe social distancing from the students at all times in the classroom but where this is not possible then they must also wear a face covering. Teachers are therefore not required to wear a mask when teaching at the front of the class within their two-metre box but will place one on if they move around the room and at other times around inside the school.

If you consider that your child would be exempt from wearing a face covering, then please do contact their Year Progress Leader to discuss the matter and request an exemption card. **Any student who does not have an exemption card will be required to wear a face covering at all times within the school building.** Fortunately, the majority of our students are able to move outside of the buildings often between lessons where they will be able to remove their coverings. We will also allow for some additional fresh air breaks for some of our younger students who stay in the same room for the majority of the school day. To reiterate, the government has said that this situation regarding face coverings in secondary classrooms will be reviewed at Easter.

Please also note that the DfE guidance states that face coverings are only required when social distancing cannot be maintained. Teachers are therefore not required to wear a mask when teaching at the front of the class within their two-metre box but, will place one on if they move around the room and at other times around inside the school.

The School Curriculum

On Friday 5th March - there will be no live lesson provision on this day but students should still attend their planned assessments. This is to enable departments to plan effectively to reintegrate our students back into school and also thoroughly plan their curriculum and assessment programme for our Year 11 and 13 students. All students will continue to have work set as self-directed assignments with instructions and these will be available on their Google classrooms in the normal way.

CONTINGENCY - Home learning plan for when school is open, and students are self-isolating due to being identified as a close contact of a positive case - From 15th March when all students are back in school:

- Staff will continue to set calendar events for ALL of their timetabled lessons that includes a Google Meet link - in case of this group having to isolate. Please note that lessons will follow their usual school timetable.
- Whole 'Bubble' isolating: Students who are isolating who are members of the 'bubble' that has been sent home to self-isolate, will be able to access all of their lessons from home via Google Meet. This protocol also applies to whole year groups being sent home. These live lessons will be 45 minutes. Based on staffing availability, it will be decided at the time whether this should be a ratio of live lessons and self-directed provision for each timetabled lesson.
- Key stage 3 students who have been identified as isolating that **do not** belong to the bubble sent home (friendship groups), will receive their lessons via 'Material' via their Google Classrooms - each subject will upload this work daily. For our Key Stage 4 & 5 students, they will be able to access the learning via google meets.

Please do note that in the event of staff bubbles closing, staff will teach their lessons (where applicable) from home and be supported by a cover teacher in the lesson on site. This will be subject to changes based on staffing availability. This protocol also stands for our Clinically Vulnerable Staff of which 8 are teachers. This does pose a logistical challenge and these staff will teach all their lessons from home until the 31st March.

Our staff have worked hard to ensure our students have continued to receive their full curriculum entitlement and we aim to seamlessly move from remote learning to face to face lessons.

Safety Routines

The school will operate under the same safety plan as it did in the autumn term. We must do all we can to avoid transmission of the virus within the school setting. This means that if your child shows any symptoms or feels unwell then they **MUST NOT** attend school. **A reminder of our safety plans will be communicated to students in a 'live assembly' on Tuesday 2nd March at 3 pm.** Our full COVID safety plan can be found on our [website](#) but to remind you includes:

- Wearing of face coverings
- Staggered start and finish time
- Zones for bubbles
- Hand sanitiser at every entrance - but we encourage students to bring their own.
- Limited movement around the school site
- Classrooms set up in rows facing forward.
- Ventilation in every room/corridor - this does mean windows are open and students should dress accordingly.
- No large group assemblies
- No school trips.
- Wear PE kit on PE days but with a school blazer
- Going straight home at the end of the school day- no congregating in groups outside of school (lockdown rules still apply for the rest of society)

Lastly, if you were unable to attend our parent forum sessions that were live-streamed on Tuesday, then the recordings and resources are all available by clicking the link below:

<https://rodingvalley.net/high-school/how-to-help-your-child/>

I do apologise for the length of this letter but there is a huge amount of important information that I need to present. I want to finish by saying how exceptionally proud I have been of our students and staff during this lockdown, many of whom have really gone the extra mile. We can all now see the light at the end of the tunnel, but we also know that the next stage of lockdown relaxation will only occur if students across the country follow the rules and limit the spread of the virus; we all remember the difficulties we all faced before the Christmas holidays. I, therefore, urge you to get your children tested and support us in our expectations so that we can keep everyone in our community safe.

We all look forward to welcoming the students back to school.

Kind regards



Sharon Jenner
Headteacher

In Summary: Timetable of Return

Timetable For Return

- **4th – 7th March: Community local LFT testing for Years 10 -13 (parents are to take them for their first test)**
- **Monday 8th March - ALL students in Years 10 -13 return to school and commence face to face lessons.**
 - 8th/9th March – 2nd Lateral flow testing for students in Year 10 – 13 in school*
 - 11th/12th March – 3rd Lateral flow testing for students in Year 10 – 13 in school*
 - Following their 3rd test, Home testing kits will then be distributed to students in Years 10 to 13 during this week.
- **For the week 8th – 12th March: Years 7 to 9 remain at home receiving remote learning /online lessons as per our normal contingency timetable used during lockdown.**
- **11th – 14th March: Community local LFT testing for Years 7 to 9 (parents are to take them for their first test)**
- **15th March; ALL students in Years 7- 9 return to school and commence face to face lessons**
 - 15th/16th March – 2nd LFT testing for students in Year 7-9*
 - 18th/19th March – 3rd LFT testing for students in Year 7-9*
 - Following their 3rd test, Home testing kits will then be distributed to students in Years 7 -9 during this week.

*Testing in school is only for students for whom we have received consent.