

TLA / GPA

3<sup>rd</sup> March 2021

Dear Parent/Carer,

### Return to School from 8<sup>th</sup> March and Face Coverings

Further to my letter of yesterday, I am now writing to provide specific timings for students to attend school for testing, prior to their return to lessons, from Monday 8<sup>th</sup> March. Thank you to all those of you who have already provided consent for this. If you haven't yet done so, this is the link that you need to follow: <https://bit.ly/2OdwhXc>

To notify us that you do not give consent for your child to undertake a Lateral Flow Device (LFD) test, please complete the short form via this link: <https://bit.ly/3e4XeHi>

We do need to know the consent status of every child so would be grateful for a prompt response. Please consider carefully that Lateral Flow Device (LFD) tests will help us to identify asymptomatic cases and ensure that those affected self-isolate to help keep the school and wider community safer and reduce the risk of disruption to in-school education.

### Dates and timings of first tests and return to school for each year group

#### PLAN FOR MASS TESTING

Mon 8<sup>th</sup> -Weds 10<sup>th</sup> March

Monday 8 <sup>th</sup> March		Tuesday 9 <sup>th</sup> March		Wednesday 10 <sup>th</sup> March	
Time	Tutor Group	Time	Tutor Group	Time	Tutor Group
08:30 am	11H	08:30 am	7H	08:30 am	8T
09:00 am	11U	09:00 am	7U	09:00 am	8E
09:30 am	11N	09:30 am	7N	09:30 am	8R
10:00 am	11T	10:00 am	7T	10:00 am	8A
10:30 am	Break	10:30 am	Break	10:30 am	Break
10:45 am	11E	10:45 am	7E	10:45 am	9H
11:15 am	10H	11:15 am	7R	11:15 am	9U
11:45 am	10U	11:45 am	7A	11:45 am	9N
12:15pm	10N	12:15pm	7L	12:15pm	9T
12:45pm	Lunch	12:45pm	Lunch	12:45pm	Lunch
1:15 pm	10T	1:15 pm	8H	1:15 pm	9E
1:45pm	10E	1:45pm	8U	1:45pm	9R
2:15pm	10R	2:15pm	8N	2:15pm	9A

Please see above the full schedule for the first 3 days of testing, indicating when your child's tutor group should attend for their tests. Students will enter the site by the side doors of the Main Hall, which will be a socially distanced waiting area. They will then be called through to the testing centre in the Learning Village where our trained team will do everything to make them feel comfortable and reassured, since we know that some youngsters will feel anxious about this process. Once the test is complete, they will leave by the rear door of the Learning Village and will be able to return home. We recommend they do

this immediately and do not gather or congregate as this could negate the effectiveness of the asymptomatic testing.

We have had a number of queries about two areas in particular which I should like to clarify:

- When students come into school for their test, **they are required to wear school uniform**, even though they will only be staying for a short period of time. This is principally so that they can be identified as Alec Hunter students in the community, and it should avoid them being challenged about where they are going.
- We know that, after the first 3 tests that are undertaken in school, students will be asked to self-test at home, and some parents have expressed uncertainty about whether they need to order these tests themselves. It is our expectation that they will be delivered in bulk to the school and we will then distribute them to students to bring home. However, this has not yet been confirmed and we have not yet taken delivery of any such consignment. Hence, we are investigating further and expect to be able to update you soon. In the meantime, we would not recommend ordering anything; we hope we will be able to share more information in plenty of time, since no home testing will be necessary until Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> March at the earliest.

### Programme for each year group in the week beginning March 8<sup>th</sup>

I recognise that yesterday's letter contained a lot of information and parents may be struggling to work out the exact schedule for their child in terms of the combination of testing, remote learning and returning to education in school. I hope that the table below will make this easier to work out – just find your child's year group and follow the pathway through the week. Please note again that, **at times marked with a T for Testing, no learning will be set for that year group**. I have tried to allow for the time required to travel to and from school when putting this plan together.

	Mon 8th March	Mon 8th March	Mon 8th March	Tue 9th March	Tue 9th March	Tue 9th March	Wed 10th March	Wed 10th March	Wed 10th March	Thu 11th March
	P1	P2-3	P4-Tut	P1-3	P4	P5-Tut	P1	P2-3	P4-Tut	Onwards
Year 11	T	T	RL	IS	IS	IS	IS	IS	IS	IS
Year 10	RL	T	T	IS	IS	IS	IS	IS	IS	IS
Year 9	RL	RL	RL	RL	RL	RL	RL	T	T	IS
Year 8 HUN	RL	RL	RL	RL	T	T	IS	IS	IS	IS
Year 8 TERA	RL	RL	RL	RL	RL	RL	T	T	RL	IS
Year 7	RL	RL	RL	T	T	RL	IS	IS	IS	IS
	T	Testing		RL	Remote Learning		IS	In School		

### Expectations

A couple of general points about the return to school:

- All students will be expected to be in full school uniform on returning to school. We understand

that the closure of some retail outlets may have made purchasing clothing more difficult, but most of the larger supermarkets sell suitable tailored trousers and school shoes, or these may be ordered online, so we trust that we can rely on your support to re-establish our requirements in this regard. We will be checking students' attire during the first week back and will notify you if any issues need to be addressed.

- PE activities will also be resuming, and students will be changing at school, as before Christmas, so please could parents ensure that students have all relevant items of PE kit with them on the appropriate days

### Face Coverings: an Update to Guidance

Yesterday's letter stated that we would be "Requiring the wearing of face masks in classrooms as well as in corridors", because this was our interpretation of the advice to schools, but a number of parents have contacted me to highlight that the wording in the DfE guidance is somewhat contradictory over whether it is 'mandatory' or 'recommended' for schools to implement this expectation. I have had contact with my professional association, seeking clarification on this matter, and they have in turn sought further confirmation from the DfE but this has not been forthcoming. Their advice is therefore that, in the absence, so far, of this clarity, leaders in secondary schools should make it clear to students and families that the use of face coverings in classrooms, where social distancing cannot be maintained, is strongly encouraged, but not to mandate their use for students who choose not to wear them.

Hence, this is the approach I intend to take:

- In corridors and communal areas, the wearing of face coverings continues to be mandatory, as it was before Christmas. Students with health conditions which prohibit this will carry the 'sunflower card'
- In classrooms, we strongly recommend that students wear face coverings, and this will be the default expectation. However, if you wish your child to be exempt from this, you have the option to write to us to make this known and we will then issue them with a 'classroom exemption' card.

I have discovered, throughout this pandemic, that the views of our community cover the full range of perspectives, and it is impossible to please everyone, but I feel this is the fairest I can be. I do wish to highlight that a number of our staff, quite understandably, feel very anxious about returning to the workplace, especially since, despite the risks involved, teachers in England are not prioritised, as they are in some other countries, for vaccination. Tragically, we have already lost a colleague in one of our Trust schools to this awful virus, and therefore my staff and I would all be most grateful if you could encourage your child to offer that added protection by wearing a face covering in class as recommended. As I said yesterday, I do not have the time to debate the science or evidence behind the effectiveness or otherwise of face masks, I am just trying to protect my colleagues and our students, so please take up these matters with the Department for Education if you wish.

If you have any other queries about our plans for the return to school, please do not hesitate to contact us. I am very much looking forward to welcoming the youngsters back into our buildings and I know we are all determined to set about bringing some normality back to everyone's daily routines as soon as we can. Thank you for all your support and understanding, and please stay safe.

Yours sincerely,



Mr T. Lawn  
Headteacher