

Dear Parent/Carer,

I am sure you will have noted the Prime Minister's announcement on 22nd February regarding plans for the full re-opening of schools. We are delighted that our students will be returning to school shortly!

We have carefully considered the Department for Education's (DfE) updated guidance for schools and this letter gives you important information on our intended next steps.

Although the headlines in the media referred to all students returning to school on Monday, 8th March, the DfE guidance points out that schools must carry out Lateral Flow Device (LFD) asymptomatic testing of students before they can begin attending lessons and therefore anticipates a 'phased return' of students across that week, as the guidance clearly states: "to manage the number of pupils passing through the test site at any one time". This is essential to ensure we re-open to all students safely by reducing the number of asymptomatic cases on site.

Arrangements for LFD testing

Schools are now expected to organise 3 LFD tests for students with each test no more than 3-5 days apart. We also have to organise testing for our staff. As you can imagine, administering such a high number of tests for students and staff is quite an undertaking.

The Department for Education and Public Health England have confirmed that we may begin the testing from Monday 1st March. We believe it is safer, more manageable and less disruptive to students' learning if all the tests are completed before students return to lessons, so **we are intending for all students to come into school only to be tested before their full return to school. After students have taken their LFD tests, they should return home straight away.**

Thank you to those of you who have already given consent for your child to be tested. The test is voluntary, but we would encourage everyone to take it in order to support the safe re-opening of school and to reduce the numbers of students who potentially have to self-isolate as a result of a positive case. **If you have not yet given consent, please complete the consent form below and return it by 5pm on Thursday, 25th February.**



<https://myeds.co.uk/m/IJQzpZGwsVwH>

We must have written consent for every student who is to be tested. If any students arrive for testing and the consent form has not been completed, we will not be able to test them.

The testing will be carried out using Lateral Flow Devices, in line with Government guidelines. Students arriving for testing should wear face coverings (unless they have an exemption), enter via the Shanklin Drive gate and report to Chine foyer via main Reception. Please kindly note:

parents/carers who are taking their child to school will not be able to park on site and should drop their child off near to the Shanklin Drive gate. Parents/Carers should not enter the school site due to our current COVID-19 health and safety measures.

We will aim to test your child as soon as possible after their arrival. They will be on site for a minimum amount of time and only with students in their own year group bubble. They will not need to wait for the test result, as this will be texted to the person named on the consent contact form, as well as to the School.

We will confirm the time we would like your child to attend for testing in a communication later this week. The dates for testing are as follows:

Date	Year Groups to come in for testing
Mon 1 March	13, 12, 11
Tue 2 March	10, 9
Wed 3 March	8, 7
Thur 4 March	13, 12, 11
Fri 5 March	10, 9
Mon 8 March	8, 7, 13
Tue 9 March	12, 11
Wed 10 March	10, 9
Thur 11 March	8, 7

Students who are considered vulnerable and those who are the children of critical workers will leave their lessons for testing if they are in school on the days when their year group is being tested.

Students who receive a positive LFD test result and any identified close contacts will have to self-isolate in line with the arrangements that we have followed previously. We will communicate this to parents/carers of relevant students.

Students returning to school full-time

Students will return full-time to school and to lessons on a phased basis, in line with the Government guidance.

The return date for each year group will be as follows:

Date of full-time return to school	Year Group
Tue 9 March	13

Wed 10 March	12, 11
Thur 11 March	10, 9
Fri 12 March	8, 7

Please note that the Year 13 trial exams will still take place from Tuesday 9th March as originally planned.

Face coverings in class

As you are aware, our policy up until this time has been for students to wear face coverings at all times on the school site, apart from in classrooms (which has been optional), when eating and drinking and when on the playground or front field at break and lunchtime. From Monday, 8th March, we will follow the updated DfE guidance that states: “face coverings should be worn in classrooms or during activities unless social distancing can be maintained”. This applies at least until Easter. The guidance also states that: “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”.

As with our previous arrangements, we will listen to requests from parents/carers for their son/daughter to be exempt from wearing a face covering if the Progress Leader has been notified. If you have notified your son/daughter’s Progress Leader previously about this, there is no need to do so again.

We will continue to operate the other measures within our ‘system of controls’ to ensure that students and staff remain safe.

Further arrangements

I will write to you in due course regarding additional matters such as the arrangements for home testing, which is also included in the latest Government guidance.

GCSE and A level arrangements

An announcement regarding how GCSEs and A Levels will be assessed this year is expected on Thursday, 25th February. This should enable us to guide Year 11 and 13 students appropriately when they return to school. We will write to you about this in due course.

I want to reassure you that we will proceed with great care and caution over the coming weeks. We appreciate how challenging the whole COVID-19 situation has been for our students and you, their families, as well as for our staff.

If you have any questions, please use the contactus@highamlaneschool.co.uk email address, indicating the nature of your query and who it is addressed to.

Thank you for your on-going support, patience and understanding.

Yours sincerely,

P. Kelly
Headteacher