



5th March 2021

Dear Parent/Carer,

I hope you and your family are keeping well.

The purpose of this letter is to give you a brief update on the lateral flow testing which has been taking place in school and also to remind you about arrangements for the return of students to school next week.

Many of our students have told us that they are looking forward to being back at school, seeing their friends and their teachers and having lessons in school again, after so much remote learning. Some of our students are feeling understandably anxious after such a long lockdown. We appreciate it has been a very challenging situation for our students and you, their families. Thank you for the fantastic way you have supported home learning so effectively. We are really looking forward to welcoming the students back to school!

I would also like to say a huge well done to our vulnerable students and the children of key workers who have attended school at any time during this lockdown. We have been so impressed by their focus, effort and behaviour.

Lateral Flow Device (LFD) testing in school

We began our LFD testing last Monday and it has gone incredibly well. I want to thank our excellent testing team and to congratulate our students taking part in the testing; they have been superb! The testing will finish on Thursday, 11th March. By that stage, the students who have been involved will have had three tests in most cases. It has been amazing to see how little anxiety the students have had when returning for their second tests. This has been useful preparation for home testing.

Lateral Flow Device (LFD) testing at home

The next stage of the process is for the School to issue LFD test kits to the students to administer at home from Monday, 15th March. These will be issued by the School. Full instructions will be issued regarding how to use the kits.

Arrangements for students to return to school

As mentioned in my previous letter, students will be returning to school next week on a phased basis as follows:

Date of full-time return to school	Year Group
Tuesday 9 th March	13
Wednesday 10 th March	12, 11
Thursday 11 th March	10, 9
Friday 12 th March	8, 7

Students considered vulnerable and the children of key workers may come to school from Monday, 8th March if a place has been booked for them, but please note - they will need to arrive at the times and gates below.

The Year 13 internal assessments will still take place from Tuesday 9th March as originally planned.



The same arrival time, arrival gate, homebase areas and timetables as for the end of last term

Students should arrive at the same time and at the same gate as they did last term:

Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays

Year Group	Arrival Time	Departure Time	Gate
7	8.40	2.55	Shanklin
8	8.40	3.05	Brookdale
9	8.40	2.55	Higham Lane
10	8.50	3.05	Shanklin
11	8.50	3.05	Higham Lane
12/13	8.55	3.05	Shanklin

Wednesdays

Year Group	Arrival Time	Departure Time	Gate
7	8.40	2.45	Shanklin
8	8.40	2.55	Brookdale
9	8.40	2.45	Higham Lane
10	8.50	2.55	Shanklin
11	8.50	2.55	Higham Lane
12/13	8.55	2.55	Shanklin

Homebase areas will be the same as last term. The only temporary change is that Year 7 students attending school from Mon 8th-Thurs 11th March will use classrooms in their bubble area (LA3, LA4 and LA5) at break and lunchtime as Chine Quad will still be used for testing.

All students will be following their usual timetable with the designated classrooms indicated on their timetables. Please note: next week is Week B.

Food

Hot and cold food will be available for students to purchase in the same way as it was last term from the day that the whole year group returns:

Y13 from Tuesday 9th March

Y12 and 11 from Wednesday 10th March

Y10 and 9 from Thursday 11th March

Y8 and 7 from Friday 12th March

The menu will be the same as it was in the autumn term.

Please note that if your child has a place booked to attend school next week as one of our vulnerable students or children of key workers, he/she will need to bring sandwiches up until the day that the rest of their year group returns to school. For example, if your child is in Year 7, he/she will need to bring sandwiches on the Monday through to the Thursday. He/she will be able to purchase food from the Friday.



Attendance expectations

The Department for Education (DfE) guidance makes it clear that students will be expected to attend school from Monday 8th March, although please note my earlier comments regarding the phased return of year groups to allow for LFD testing.

We appreciate that some students and their parents/carers may feel anxious about the student returning to school. This may include students who have shielded in the past but no longer need to, or those living in a household with someone who is clinically vulnerable or extremely vulnerable.

We will work closely with these students and their families, discuss any concerns with parents/carers and provide reassurance on the measures we are putting in place to reduce any risks. The DfE guidance makes clear, however, that schools must remind these parents/carers that students "must be in school unless a statutory reason applies".

Clinically extremely vulnerable students

Students in this category should have been contacted previously by their GP and the DfE has advised that they should continue to remain at home and shield until further notice. The parents/carers of these students should inform their Progress Leader about this please.

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 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". This applies at least until Easter, when the DfE will review the guidance.

Students will need a clean face covering each day please, and at least one spare covering. Each face covering should be stored in a clean plastic bag.

We entirely appreciate that wearing face coverings in class all day will be challenging for our students, but please kindly remember, the guidance has changed because of health and safety and the new Covid-19 variant which has been in circulation since the original guidance was issued. Our approach will be one of encouragement and of praise for those who are doing all they can to protect their community and support us in doing all that we can to keep the school open with everyone attending on site. As with the autumn term, we are expecting high levels of compliance with this measure and senior leaders will work hard to encourage any students without face masks to comply. We hope that everyone in the school community will do all they can to keep themselves and others as safe as possible.

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.

Please note that students involved in the forthcoming Year 11 and Year 13 internal assessments will not be required to wear face coverings during these assessments (although they may, of course, choose to do so) as these are being conducted in the Gym/Sixth Form Conference Room and other venues in line with exam board rules



regarding minimum distancing requirements between students which also allow us to meet the government's social distancing requirements.

Face coverings for staff in class

The updated DfE guidance is now stating: "We now also recommend that face coverings should be worn in classrooms or during activities unless social distancing can be maintained". Given the size of our classrooms, we are asking all staff to follow this. We appreciate the challenges this may create for teachers and LSAs in their teaching during lessons.

Supporting students with impairments

DfE guidance makes exemptions for staff who have to "speak to or provide help to someone who relies on lip reading, clear sound or facial expression to communicate". Staff will not therefore wear a face covering when teaching any of the students with these needs. They will wear their face coverings with these classes at those points in the lesson when they are not giving out instructions or teaching from the front.

School uniform and personal appearance expectations

Our usual school uniform and personal appearance expectations remain in place. These can be found in the Student Organiser. Please contact the School if you have concerns about obtaining the correct uniform for your child. Thanks for your support with this.

Other measures to keep students and staff safe

We will continue to operate the other measures within our 'system of controls' to ensure that students and staff remain safe, including high standards of regular cleaning and maximising ventilation in classrooms through keeping doors and windows open.

A calm, positive outlook!

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. We are just so looking forward to welcoming our students back to school and working with them once again!

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.

Farewell to a member of staff

On 22nd February, we said farewell to our colleague, Mrs Campbell, from our Support for Learning Department. I would like to thank Mrs Campbell for all her dedicated support to our students during her time with us and her assistance to our staff. We wish her every happiness and success in her next post.

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

Yours sincerely,

P.Kelly
Headteacher

(KL-AA) A Message from Mr Kelly - 5 March 2021