

BET/ZEVS

26 February 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

Arrangements to Reopen School

Over the last few days we have looked very carefully at the guidance issued by the government for the reopening of schools. A DfE update on the arrangements for the re-opening of schools can be found [here](#). Below I have outlined a skeleton of our plans for the return to school of all students from 8 March. I am now seeking your views on our proposals so we can finalise our plans. We will then issue our final plans by the middle of next week.

Covid Testing

Earlier this week I wrote to you asking for consent for students to take part in our Covid testing programme; all students will be offered three tests, 3-5 days apart over their first two weeks back in school, and we strongly encourage all students to take part. Please refer to the letter, available [here](#), for full details of how consent can be given. In the original letter we sent via email, we gave a separate link in step 1 of the consent process for Sixth Form; we have now removed the separate link, and all students can be registered using the links in the letter on the website. If Sixth Form students have already consented using the separate link we originally sent, there is no need to register again, we will transfer these consents across.

Please can I ask that all consents are given by Wednesday 3 March to enable us to arrange the administration for the tests.

Plan for reopening

The government has stipulated that students can only return to onsite education having been offered a first Covid test. For this reason, we will not be able to welcome all students back to school on 8 March. Schools are able to stagger the return of students over the course of the week beginning 8 March, and we will need to do this to ensure that:

- a) Tests can be administered safely
- b) We minimise the risk of students and staff coming into close contact with students who test positive at this first test.

We are currently training further staff to be able to administer tests, and have calculated that we should be able to administer up to 500 tests a day, using a workforce of approximately 18. We are having to plan this carefully, and significantly upscale the testing programme we are using for staff and critical worker/vulnerable students currently in school.



We believe that the safest option is to ask students to come into school to take a Covid test the day before they return to onsite education. Students will come into school at an allotted time in small groups, take the test and then go straight home again. You will be notified of the result of the test via the mobile number/email you use to register.

While we fully appreciate this will have an impact on those that need to transport their children to and from school, we believe this will prevent unnecessary contact with others and reduce risk for the whole school community. Doing testing this way will ensure students can remain socially distanced from all other students and staff. You will be sent a notification inviting your child(ren) to attend a slot on their first testing day. Please support us by ensuring that your child attends as promptly as possible.

If students receive a negative test result, they will then be able to return to school the following day and have a normal day in school. If you do not give consent for your child to be tested, they will return to school on the first full day of onsite education for that year group. Testing does remain voluntary but we are strongly recommending that all students participate in the programme as this will reduce the risk for all.

As outlined below, we will stagger the return of year groups in line with government recommendations, starting with Years 10-13. The government has stipulated that we are able to start tests before 8 March, and we hope to be able to start testing some students on Friday 5 March.

Below is a draft plan for when each year group will be offered their first test and subsequently return to school. This will be confirmed next week along with the timings that students should come to school for their test. If, once testing starts, this timescale proves unrealistic, we will adjust it accordingly.

Date for first Covid Test and return to school

Friday 5 March: Year 12 (return to school Monday 8 March)

Monday 8 March: Year 13 & Year 11 (return to school Tuesday 9 March)

Tuesday 9 March: Year 10 & Year 9 (return to school Wednesday 10 March)

Wednesday 10 March: Year 8 & Year 7 (return to school Thursday 11 March)

Other points to note:

- Students will continue to receive remote lessons until their return date.
- Students will be offered a second and third Covid test in school. These will operate slightly differently as students will already be in lessons onsite.
- The school will be open throughout the week from Monday 8 March for all vulnerable and critical worker students, as it has been throughout the lockdown. All teachers will be in school so these students will be able to follow their normal timetable. We will not be accepting any additional students to our critical/vulnerable provision during this week.

Friday 5 March

In order to enable us to prepare fully for the return to school, there will not be live lessons delivered by teachers on Friday 5 March, with the exception of those classes that have scheduled assessments. For Year 13 students with assessments on Friday, and other class groups with arranged assessments on this day, teachers will still administer these. For all other lessons, appropriate work will be set on Microsoft Teams for each lesson and students will be expected to follow their normal timetable to complete the set work. Although we will still offer vulnerable and critical worker provision on this day, we ask for your support in keeping students at home if it is safe to do so to enable staff to prepare for the return of all students.

Health and Safety on Site

A key change in the new guidance that I want to alert you to is the use of **face coverings in classrooms for secondary age students**. We will be implementing government guidance that all students, except those exempt for medical reasons, will need to wear face coverings in all internal areas, including classrooms, where 2-metre social distancing is not possible. It is advisable that all students have surplus masks on a daily basis. Attendance on-site will be mandatory for all students except for those who are Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV) and have received shielding letters from their GP practice. We will issue more guidance on this next week.

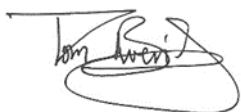
We are updating our operational risk assessment and will publish this on our website next week.

Your views

We now welcome your views on the draft proposals above, please complete the Microsoft form [here](#) by the end of Monday 1st March.

We are all very much looking forward to returning to something closer to normality, and to seeing more students on site. Thank you very much for your continued support.

Yours faithfully



Tom Beveridge
Headteacher