

Frequently Asked Questions: Parents and Carers

Updated 03/03/21



**Alderbrook School
& Sixth Form**
AMBITION | BRAVERY | KINDNESS

March reopening for all students

In response to the survey that parents and carers completed, we have compiled the questions and answers below. This document should be read in conjunction with the *Information for Parents and Carers* document and the *Instructions for Covid Testing* document. We have not been able to answer every question posed by parents in the survey, but have covered all main areas of enquiry.

The first 2 sections have been written solely in response to the questions posed by parents and carers in the February/March survey. The question and answers below that were originally written for September 2020 reopening, and some answers have been adapted to reflect current guidance.

COVID TESTING OF STUDENTS

Will students be allocated time slots to attend their first test?

Yes. Students will be allocated a time slot by surname in their year group. Please see the *Instructions for Covid Testing* document for further details. This was sent via email and is also on the school website.

Do students have to wear school uniform to their first test appointment?

Yes. While we understand that students will only be attending school for a short appointment, we have employed exam invigilators to support with testing who may not be familiar with all students. We need to ensure we can recognise students and their year group; wearing of school uniform is important to enable us to do this.

Will siblings be able to attend the first test together, even if they are in different year groups? Can parents use some form of sign up system to choose initial test times?

Siblings will not be able to attend their first test together unless they are in the same year group. We fully appreciate that this may create logistical difficulties for parents but we are unable to organise this in the short time we have. Likewise, we have not been able to create a booking system in the short time we have had to arrange the testing. We are extremely grateful for your flexibility and understanding.

What will be the expectations of students at our onsite testing centre?

Our Asymptomatic Testing Site (ATS) is based in our Sports Hall. Students are expected to behave sensibly, adhere to social distancing and wear a face mask at all times at the ATS. Students must follow all instructions from the trained staff at the ATS.

Will staff be administering tests or will students be expected to administer the test themselves?

Students will be supported to administer the LFD test themselves. Trained staff will be on hand to support students through the process. Having run the test centre for critical worker students and vulnerable students, staff are aware of the issues that can arise and will support students throughout.

My child is very anxious about coming to school for a Covid test, what support measures are in place?

Staff have all been trained to support students through this process. There will be staff in the centre that students are familiar with and they will be able to speak to them prior to the test to talk them through the process. If students do struggle with the test we will contact you to discuss this.

My child will not be able to put the swab in their mouth, will they be able to put the swab just in their nostrils instead?

Although the test is designed to swab both the tonsils and the nostrils, we have been advised that students are able to swab both nostrils instead if they are unable to swab their tonsils. Trained staff will be on hand to support students through this process. We have also been asked if students are able to swab their tonsils and not their nostrils; we are seeking advice on this question.

I have not given consent for my child to be tested, will my child be able to return to school?

We are strongly encouraging all students to be given consent to be tested as this will help to reduce risk for the whole school community. If you do not consent for your child to be tested, they will still be able to return to school with the rest of their year group.

Will parents be able to drive onsite if they are dropping off students for testing?

No, if students need to be dropped off this should happen away from the school site. We are sorry that we can't accommodate cars on the site, but we have students currently in school and will have students returning to lessons throughout next week, so it will not be safe to have this number of vehicles coming onto the site during the school day. Please arrange a safe place to drop off and pick up students; the pedestrian gates on Dingle Lane and Blossomfield Road will be open and staffed throughout the day. Students will need to be in school for no more than 30 minutes.

How will I find out the result of my child's test?

You will be notified by email or text with the outcome of the test. This will be sent to the email or mobile number you used to register. If your child's test result is positive or void, we will contact you separately to discuss next steps. There is only a small possibility that the test result will be void, and if this is the case we will ask your child to come to the ATS the following morning to take a further test before school starts. Please do not worry if you do not, for whatever reason, get sent the automatic notification of the test result as we will contact you directly if there are any issues. However, if you have any concerns please don't hesitate to contact the school.

Will we have to test our children at home after the initial 3 tests in school?

The government has arranged for home testing kits to be given to students following their first 3 tests in school. We will send out more information about the distribution and administration of these tests in the days ahead.

Will children who have not been given consent to be tested be returning to school with their year group?

Yes. All students who have not been given consent to have a test, will be able to return on the designated day for their year group. We are strongly encouraging all students to be tested to reduce risk for the community, and the more students that are regularly tested, the more it will reduce risk for all.

If a child is unwell or has Covid symptoms, are they able to attend school to receive a test?

No, the ATS in school is strictly for asymptomatic testing. It is crucial that, if students have any Covid symptoms, they isolate at home and get a PCR test at a local testing centre.

What happens if my child comes into contact with a confirmed case?

We have designed the system for the first test to limit the chances of anyone coming into contact with a confirmed case. If, once back in school, students come into contact with a confirmed case, we will continue to liaise with the Public Health team and will ask close contacts to isolate for up to 10 days. During the period of isolation, students will have access to remote learning.

WEARING OF FACE COVERINGS

We are concerned about students having to wear face coverings all day, how will this be managed?

Based on the most recent government advice, we are asking all students and staff, except those who are exempt, to wear face masks in all internal areas where at least 2m social distancing is not possible, including classrooms. We understand that this will be challenging for students, and this will be reviewed at Easter. Students will not be expected to wear masks outside, or in lessons such as PE where they are physically exerting themselves. We ask that students bring surplus masks to school to ensure they have extra in case these are lost or broken during the school day.

Will PE be outside as much as possible so face masks do not have to be worn?

Yes, we will continue to do PE outside wherever possible, and students will not be required to wear face coverings during physical exertion.

We are concerned about the wearing of face masks in classrooms, will this be compulsory for all students?

We understand that the wearing of masks in classroom will be challenging for some students. However, the government has strongly recommended that masks should be worn in classrooms where 2m distancing is not possible and we will be adopting this advice to reduce risk for all. We will be asking all students, except those who are exempt, to wear masks in lessons and all internal areas where 2m distancing is not possible. The government has stated that this advice will be reviewed at Easter, and we will be reviewing our own procedures at that point.

Is it possible to sit all students over 2m apart so they don't have to wear face coverings?

Unfortunately our classroom sizes do not allow for social distancing of 2m or more in lessons in the majority of cases. Therefore masks will be worn in lessons. Teachers have a 2m zone at the front of classrooms where they can teach from; if they are in this zone and over 2m from any students, they will have the option to take off their mask in order to clearly communicate with their classes and to deliver effective lessons.

TRANSPORT AND TIMINGS OF THE SCHOOL DAY

Will the start and end timings of the school day remain the same for all students?

While we will control the movement of students onto our school site, there are many students in different year groups who rely on buses to get into school. Therefore, we plan to start and end the school day at similar times for all students. The timings for the school days will remain as 8.30am-2.50pm. The buses will run as normal from March 8. School bus timetables have been published on the Solihull Council website <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/Schools-and-learning/School-buses>

Why not stagger start and end times?

We believe that we can safely move students on and off the school site without staggering start and end times too much. The added disruption of staggering start times would also disrupt the breadth of curriculum available to students. We are working closely with other local schools, particularly Tudor Grange, to ensure that student movement on and off our sites is well managed. The 5 minute stagger at the end of the day should avoid bottle necks at the school gates. In partnership with Tudor Grange, we are working to ensure Dingle Lane is a **'no waiting zone'**. We ask for your support in ensuring that no cars or pedestrians stop and wait on Dingle Lane as we know this can get very busy at the start and end of the school day. Please can you also ensure that your child does not wait outside Tudor Grange for their friends.

Once on the school site, we will quickly move students to their classroom for their first lesson.

Will break and lunch be staggered?

Yes. There will be 2 breaks and 2 lunches will continue, ensuring that each year group will be kept separate at break and lunch. Each year group will have access to its own canteen/servery, toilet block, and indoor and outside space. The same food and drink will be available from each servery.

Will parents be able to pick up their children at the end of the school day?

We ask that if you need to drop off and pick up your child, you arrange to do this away from the school site. We will only be allowing cars onto site that have a permit or if someone has a medical need or vulnerability.

SUPPORT AVAILABLE FOR STUDENTS

My child is very anxious about the return to school – what will be done to support them?

We understand that many students will be anxious about returning to school after a long absence. Tutors and teachers will support students through this time; tutors have been in regular contact with their tutor groups, and are aware of students who have had difficulties. Any student who needs additional support will be able to get this from the pastoral team. We are also working with a number of external agencies to support students.

How will you help students catch up on any missed learning during the second period of closure?

This will be a key concern for many parents, carers and students. We are working with all curriculum leaders to ensure that all teachers assess gaps in learning. For most students, these gaps will be addressed in lessons as the teacher identifies which topics need to be revisited and embedded. Teachers are evaluating the curriculum to make sure that time is provided to ensure important foundation knowledge is well understood before moving on. There are likely to be some students who need extra support, and these students may be invited to further intervention at the end of the school day.

SAFETY MEASURES ON THE SCHOOL SITE

Will social distancing be maintained at break and lunch time?

The school will support all students in maintaining social distancing at break and lunch time. Year groups will have designated areas on the school site, and will be encouraged to use outside areas when the weather is good. Each year group will have access to a large, well-ventilated internal space. We strongly advise parents to speak to their children about the importance of maintaining social distancing at all times.

Will risk assessments be carried out for clinically vulnerable students?

If you are concerned about the clinical vulnerability of your child please contact the school via the office email and we will arrange for someone to speak to you about any reasonable adjustments that have been put in place.

Could each child wipe his/ her desk on entering the room?

Cleaning of all hard surfaces will take place regularly during the school day. There will not be a requirement for students to wipe desks on entering any room. However, wipes and surface cleaner will be available in every classroom if a student chooses to use them. All students and staff will use hand sanitiser on entry and exit of every room, and hand hygiene will be promoted across the school. It is important that the school is aware of any allergies to sanitisers your child may have.

Will students remain in the same class group throughout the day?

Students in Years 7 and 8 will remain in the same learning groups for all lessons – this will be reviewed if the guidance changes. Students in Years 9-13 will not remain in the same class groups in order for them to be able to access all of their subjects.

Can risk assessments be shared?

Yes. The main Operational Risk Assessment for reopening the school is available on the school website. There is also a separate risk assessment for the Asymptomatic Testing Site.

Will there be additional cleaning in place?

Yes. Cleaning staff will be on site to carry out additional cleaning of toilets, classrooms, canteens and communal areas, as well as frequently touched surfaces.

Will there be sufficient hand washing and hand sanitising facilities?

Yes. Hand sanitiser stations will be available at all entry points to buildings for students and staff, and each classroom will have hand sanitiser. Soap and hand washing stations will be readily available in all toilet blocks.

Will those in the same year be able to interact at break times as they may not know others in their new options classes which could cause concern.

Yes. Students will be able to interact with all students in their year group at break and lunch time. However social distancing must be maintained at all times.

I am concerned students will not follow social distancing guidance on the way to and from school and while on site.

If any student deliberately or consistently fails to follow rules that are put into place for everyone's protection, then contact will be made with the student's parents. An addendum has been added to the school's behaviour policy to help the school to protect all students and staff. We strongly advise parents to speak to their children about the importance of maintaining social distancing whilst travelling to and from school.

Will policies be reviewed to check they are fit for purpose as we bring students back into school?

Yes. We have reviewed our safeguarding and behaviour policies. We have also updated our First Aid procedures, emergency evacuation procedures and classroom expectations.

SUSPECTED OR CONFIRMED CASES OF COVID-19

What will happen if a student develops symptoms of COVID-19 while on the school site?

Should a student become unwell, they should tell their teacher who will request support from a trained first aider.

If a child exhibits symptoms of COVID-19 they will be isolated in the pupil support area until a parent or designated adult can come to collect them. In this scenario, the following should then happen:

- Your household should self-isolate. You should engage with the NHS Test and Trace process so that cases can be identified and action taken - this means if your child develops symptoms, you should arrange for them to get a test and you should inform school of the results of that test. Additional guidance is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>
- Where the student or staff member tests negative, they can return to school and the fellow household members can end their self-isolation.
- Where the student tests positive, your household will be asked to self-isolate in line with current public health guidance.
- In the case of a positive test, the school will work with the local health protection team to ascertain whether any other students or staff are required to self-isolate for 10 days. This may be the case if someone has been in close, face-to-face contact with someone who has tested positive for the virus.

If there is a confirmed case, will children who are close contacts still be asked to self-isolate?

Yes. The government initially stated that students who were identified as close contacts would be able to receive a LFD Covid test every day for 7 days in order to stay in school, however it has now changed its advice. All students who are identified as a close contact will have to isolate for up to 10 days. Teachers will continue to upload classwork onto Microsoft Teams, and will deliver live remote lessons where possible to those students who have been asked to isolate.

FOOD AND DRINK

What arrangements are being made for food and drinks available for the students?

All students will have access to hot and cold options at school. We will not be able to offer our full menu as food will need to be 'grab and go'. The same offering of food will be available at each servery as each year group will only have access to one servery to prevent mixing with other year groups. We will require students to bring bottled water with them to school. For hygiene reasons, water fountains will not be available.

Is the biometric fingerprint system being used by students to pay for food?

Yes students will be using biometrics to purchase food. The fingerprint reader is cleaner using anti-bacterial wipes between every use.

REMOTE LEARNING AND ATTENDANCE

Will attendance be compulsory?

Yes. Attendance is mandatory for all students except for those who are Extremely Clinically Vulnerable and have a letter from their GP asking them to shield.

A small number of children may not be able to attend school if they are following public health advice and self-isolating, for instance. Where children are not able to attend school as parents are following clinical and/or public health advice, the absence will not be penalised.

If you have concerns about your child returning to school, because you consider they may have other risk factors, you should make contact with the school via the office email. We will work with you to support your child.

Will resources still be available online if certain students are forced to self-isolate?

Yes. All lesson resources will be posted on Microsoft Teams and homework will continue to be posted on ClassCharts.

GCSEs AND A LEVELS

We will publish information on this topic separately and will write to all students and parents effected.

GENERAL

Will students be required to wear school uniform?

Yes. All students will be required to wear normal school uniform every day.