



2 March 2021

Dear Parent/Guardian

I am writing to you to give further information about the full reopening of school, testing and other details relating to the next few weeks that you might find useful. The school leadership team and other staff have been focussed on our preparations so that as students return, they do so safely and in a well organised manner. I would appreciate you taking some time to talk to your child and assist them in preparing for the full return to school.

The government guidance to parents about the opening of schools in the current phase of the pandemic can be found [here](#). Much of the guidance is very similar to the guidance we were following in September and many of our control measures are identical. There are, however, some differences which I would ask you to study closely.

Testing and face to face return dates

Yesterday, Mrs Foster, our School Business Manager wrote to you with the dates on which we will invite your child into school for the first of three “lateral flow tests”. These dates are repeated below. It has been heartening to see hundreds of our parents giving consent to allow the school to test students. This will support confidence across the school that, as students return, asymptomatic cases can be picked up and infection outbreaks avoided. As a result, we envisage carrying out over 2,500 tests across a two-week period. As you can see from the picture, the school sports hall has been turned into our mass testing centre and is ready for action.



The dates of students’ first test and their return to face-to-face teaching are outlined in the table below. The guiding principle is that students will attend school to get tested and then, provided their test is negative, they will return to face to face teaching the next day.*

Year Group	Date of First test	Date of return to face-to-face teaching
11*	08/03 – am	09/03*
10	08/03 – pm	09/03
9	10/03 – am	11/03
8	09/03 – pm	10/03
7	09/03 – am	10/03

**Although they will commence full face to face teaching on Tuesday 9 March, Year 11 students will be asked to remain in school after their first test on Monday 8 March. This is to allow for 15 – 20 minutes Academic Mentoring session (see below for more details). They will then be dismissed.*

Tomorrow (Wednesday 3 March), you will receive a letter from your child’s Head of Year with the specific time we are inviting them in to school to complete their first test. As you can appreciate, we are managing this process very carefully to maximise social distancing and would ask that your child attend school only at the time specified. With the exception of Year 11, Students will be dismissed immediately after their first test to return home. We will, of course, contact you after approximately 30 minutes if they test positive for COVID. Negative

results will be communicated via NHS Test & Trace over the course of the day on which they are tested.

Following their first test, students will be tested on two further occasions up until Friday 19 March. The government has advised that students should take three tests in school, in order to further screen for asymptomatic cases and to give students the opportunity to learn how to effectively self-administer the lateral flow test at home. This is important as, following the mass testing programme, students will be given lateral flow test kits to test twice a week at home. Currently our plan is to complete the second and third tests at the following times (this is a provisional plan and is subject to change):

Year Group	Second test	Third test
Year 7	Friday 12 March (morning)	Wednesday 17 March (morning)
Year 8	Friday 12 March (afternoon)	Wednesday 17 March (afternoon)
Year 9	Monday 15 March (afternoon)	Thursday 18 March (morning)
Year 10	Thursday 11 March (afternoon)	Tuesday 16 March (morning)
Year 11	Thursday 11 March (morning)	Monday 15 March (morning)

Students will be taken out of lessons for their test.

If your child has tested positive for COVID in the last 90 days, NHS guidance states that they are exempt from retesting for 90 days unless new symptoms develop. This is due to fragments of inactive virus still being potentially present. If you have not informed us that your child has tested positive in the last 90 days, please could you do so as soon as possible.

Year 11 – Academic Mentoring

After their initial test on Monday 8 March, year 11 students will attend a brief 15-20 min academic mentoring session with a member of staff. The mentoring sessions will explore students' readiness for their return to school, their academic progress since the lockdown and will help them map out their crucial next steps. Miss Hancock, Head of Year 11, is organising these sessions and will be in touch with students with further information.

Online learning and Special Provision 8-10 March

As we gradually welcome students back, we will continue to provide remote learning for the students who are waiting to return. Similarly, our special provision will be available for students in those year groups who are yet to recommence face to face teaching.

Due to the increased staffing demands, students in relevant year groups who are learning remotely will have their live tutor session (as usual) but will then have asynchronous (non-live) lessons for the rest of the school day.

Control measures in place to keep people safe

As was the case in the autumn term, the government has asked schools to implement a series of measures to promote the safety of everyone using the school and to minimise the risks from Coronavirus.

Our full Risk Assessment has been updated in line with government guidance and has been approved by the Maiden Erlegh Trust board. It can be found on our COVID website page [here](#).

Positive cases and Students who have symptoms of COVID

Please may I remind parents that you should not send your child to school if they:

- have [symptoms](#) or live in a household with someone who has symptoms;
- have tested positive themselves, even if they do not have symptoms;
- live in a household with someone who has tested positive, even if that person does not have symptoms;
- are a close contact of someone who has coronavirus (COVID-19);
- are required to self-isolate for travel-related reasons;
- live in the same household or are in a bubble with somebody who is awaiting test results.

Please inform the school if your child meets any of these criteria. In these instances, remote learning provision will be made as per our COVID response plans which can be found on the website [here](#).

Hygiene

One of the most important measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 is good hygiene. We will be regularly reminding students to wash/sanitise their hands and also have a packet of tissues should they have a cold.

We have also increased the number of wall dispensers and these, alongside toilet soap dispensers, will be checked regularly throughout the day.

Enhanced cleaning

We have put enhanced cleaning measures in place to ensure that the focus is on areas which may be touched regularly by students such as handles and doors. This is in addition to our daily cleaning regime that occurs at the end of each school day.

Ventilation

The government guidance emphasises that classrooms should be well-ventilated. This means that, where possible, we will be taking additional measures (e.g. opening more windows and doors).

Year group bubbles and staggered timings

Students will continue to work and socialise (at breaks and lunchtimes) in their year group bubbles. This ensures that any outbreak of the infection is limited within a year group. Where possible, students will be encouraged to socially distance. In order to support this approach, we will continue to stagger the start and the end of the school day. Lunchtimes and break times will also continue to be staggered so that the year group bubbles do not mix. The staggered start and end to the day is as follows:

Year Group	Tutor begins:	Students dismissed:
Year 7	8.30am	2.50pm (2.15pm on Fridays)
Year 8	8.30am	2.50pm (2.15pm on Fridays)
Year 9	8.40am	2.55pm (2.20pm on Fridays)
Year 10	8.40am	2.55pm (2.20pm on Fridays)
Year 11	8.30am	2.50pm (2.15pm on Fridays)

Face Coverings

The latest guidance from the Government has changed with regards face coverings. From 8 March the wording has changed to the following:

Where pupils in year 7 (which would be children who were aged 11 on 31 August 2020) and above are educated, we recommend that face coverings should be worn by adults and pupils when moving around the premises, outside of classrooms, such as in corridors and communal areas where social distancing cannot easily be maintained. Face coverings do not need to be worn by pupils when outdoors on the premises.

In addition, we now also recommend in those schools, that 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.

The second paragraph is particularly important and is a change in stance from the Government. We are therefore expecting all students, unless medically exempt, to wear face coverings when inside any building at school. The only exception to this will be when students are eating their lunch or when practical PE is taught. The risk of transmission is significantly lower when outside and it is important that students are able to take their face coverings off at some point, so we will be directing all students to be outside during their morning break (weather dependent).

Teachers, when teaching from the 2-metre box at the front of the room, will not be required to wear a covering (as they are distanced from students) but will be expected to put one on should they leave that space.

Any students not wearing face coverings will be encouraged by staff to do so. If you decide that your child should be exempt from wearing a face covering (for example due to a medical exemption), please email the office, marked for the attention of your child's Head of Year to discuss further. Exempt students will be asked to wear an identifying lanyard to avoid further discussion or challenge.

Safety measures in classrooms

In lessons and wherever possible, students will be in normal class sizes and all chairs will face the front. The arrangement of rooms into rows means the time spent facing each other is minimised and thus the risk is reduced. Teachers will deliver lessons from the front of the room and there will be a gap of at least two metres between them and the students on the front row, again to minimise any risk to both the student and staff member. Should a student need individual support, this will be given from the side or behind.

Where resources need to be given out, these will be shared by the teacher to minimise the number of people touching them. The member of staff will also sanitise their hands before touching the resources each time. Homework will predominantly be submitted via Google Classroom and marked via this platform also. Where work cannot be handed in this way, there will be a 48 hour window before the member of staff takes the work home (if they have to) and a 48 hour window to return the work to minimise the risk.

There will be no shared tools for learning and so it is vital that students bring what is required for school. Mr Hood, Assistant Headteacher, will be writing to you tomorrow to remind you of what students need to bring. We appreciate your support in ensuring your child is fully equipped for school.

Windows will be kept open in classrooms and where extraction air conditioning units are available, these will be used to improve the ventilation.

What to do if your child develops symptoms of COVID 19

If your child develops symptoms of COVID-19, they must not come to school and should remain at home for at least 10 days from the date when their symptoms appeared. Anyone with symptoms will be eligible for testing and this can be arranged via <https://www.nhs.uk/askfor-a-coronavirus-test> or by calling 119. All other household members who remain well, must stay at home and not leave the house for 10 days. This includes anyone in your 'Support Bubble'. Further information is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid19-infection> The 10-day period starts from the day when the first person in the house became ill.

Clinically Extremely Vulnerable students

If your child has received a letter informing them to shield, please contact the school so we can discuss this with you. These students should continue to shield until 31 March and so we need to plan their education carefully. They will access their learning remotely.

Academic Progress

We have been monitoring students' academic progress throughout the latest lockdown. I am pleased to report that the majority of students have continued, in their characteristically resilient manner, to work and study hard. We do have plans in place to support any student who has fallen behind and once we have recommenced face to face teaching, we will review our curriculum and adjust accordingly. We will make contact, in due course, with parents where we feel extra intervention is needed.

Mental wellbeing

We are aware that some students have found this period of lockdown tough. As a result, tutors and Heads of Year will triage any concerns and pass them onto our inclusion team. If you are concerned about your child and their mental health, please contact the school office and we will aim to work with them on their return. As always, we are here to support students and we believe that normal routine will certainly help them settle back in to school quickly.

Uniform

School uniform is expected to be worn in full as students return to face to face lessons. These expectations will be outlined in a letter which you should receive tomorrow. As in the Autumn term, students will be expected to come to school in their **school PE kit** on days when they have practical PE.

Staff training Day: Friday 5 March

I would like to remind parents that we have called an additional staff training day on Friday. This is to bring all the staff back into school, to prepare the building and classrooms, to refresh staff understanding of our safety measures and to allow staff to meet for further planning. There will be no remote lessons during this day and special provision will not be running.

And finally...

We will, of course, be providing you with further information about the physical reopening of schools in due course but I hope this reassures you that we are ready to welcome students back to Maiden Erlegh School in Reading and we cannot wait to have them back in the building again!

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mr A Johnson', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Mr A Johnson
Headteacher