

25<sup>th</sup> February 2021



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Dear Parents and Carers

I hope you and your families are all staying well and sharing a sense of hope with the warmer weather and lighter days and the announcements about the roadmap out of lockdown that we heard on Tuesday evening. I am sure this will bring relief for many of you, after another long period of home schooling and I would like to send my heartfelt appreciation for the wonderful support you have all given us with your child's learning throughout this period. We are so excited to welcome our young people back into school! Additionally, during this recent period, I extend another huge thank you to parents, carers and members of the community for the many efforts made to support our staff and students. These have ranged from supportive messages and feedback, giving your time to volunteer with testing, through to sourcing laptops and support for students and supplying cakes for our brilliant staff team! We thank you all for your wonderful spirit, support and sense of community.

I am writing to outline our plans for **students returning to school beginning Monday 8th March and throughout that week**. Of course all schools will have differing circumstances to manage and consider and there is much to organise, so every school's return plan will look slightly different in order to ensure a safe and efficient return for all. Plans are still in progress but I wanted to give you some information about our aims to get students back to school as soon as possible, in line with the guidance and directives that schools are being asked to follow.

#### **Testing:**

Schools have been asked to offer students their initial asymptomatic lateral flow tests on site and students and staff should return to face-to-face education following their first negative test result. We are advised the tests should be within a 3-5 day window of each other and we will need to stagger the return of students in order to safely manage the number of pupils passing through the test site at any one time. We will be instigating a testing programme for all students starting Thursday 4th March, to reduce the disruption to teaching and to ensure those students in exam years are able to return at the earliest opportunity. Students will be invited into school on their test day and return home and subject to a negative result, will be able to attend school the next day. Remote lessons will continue until your child is back in school. After initial testing in school, students will be given self testing kits to be done at home, twice a week (more information to follow). The following plan indicates your child's test date and return to school date; individual appointment windows and further details will follow next week.

Date	Test	Return to School
Thurs 4/3	Y12/13	
Fri 5/3	Y11	
Sat 6/3		
Sun 7/3		
Mon 8/3	Y12/13 (test 2) & Y10	Y11, Y12/13
Tues 9/3	Y11 (test 2) & 8WP, 8AK, 8NG	Y10
Wed 10/3	Y9 & 8JT, 8CC	8WP, 8AK, 8NG
Thurs 11/3	Y7	Y9 & 8JT, 8CC
Fri 12/3	Y10 (test 2) & 8WP, 8AK, 8NG (test 2)	Y7
Sat 13/3		
Sun 14/3		
Mon 15/3	Y9 (test 2) & 8JT, 8CC (test 2)	
Tues 16/3	Y7 (test 2)	

We will send a separate letter out to you all clarifying times and the protocols.

**We have made a short video of our testing centre which will be posted on our website so that you can see and understand what happens and how it is organised, and we hope this will reassure you that the team have done a brilliant job at preparing a very professional and safe setting.** Testing is by consent and we strongly advise that all pupils are tested alongside our staff, to ensure that we are minimising risks of Covid transmission and keeping disruption to a minimum. You will be given the option to:

- Use school testing arrangements
- Use Asymptomatic local centres
- Opt out (not advised)

**Please remember to return your consent forms to us as soon as possible to allow us to plan.**

Consent forms have been sent out via MyEd and a copy is on our website. Students aged 18+ are able to self consent but will still need to return a consent form.

Please be aware that in order to prepare and coordinate this next week, and also whilst students are coming to and from school for testing, there may be occasions where staff upload work tasks for students rather than run a full live lesson.

#### **Volunteers.**

A huge thank you to those volunteers who have already kindly given up their time to train and carry out testing on site throughout the lockdown period for vulnerable and key worker children and staff. It has been a heartwarming community effort. Given the logistical challenges to ensure this coming plan runs smoothly, if any parent, carer or member of our community are able to offer your support to join our testing workforce on the days above, please do send your name, contact details and availability to: [volunteers@kingethelbert.kent.sch.uk](mailto:volunteers@kingethelbert.kent.sch.uk)

#### **Key Worker and Vulnerable Student Provision.**

This will finish on Friday 5th March. We hope you will understand that we will be unable to provide supervision on site from 8th March for these students, prior to their return day.

**Return to School.**

As per the guidance, we will return to staggered timings in order to keep bubbles apart. We understand that it is difficult to time arrivals precisely but we would greatly appreciate your help in trying to stick to these times and avoiding gathering at all times. Staff will be on hand at the gates to greet and direct students who should then go straight to their tutor rooms on arrival at the following times:

<b>Year:</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12/13</b>
<b>Arrival time:</b>	<b>08:45</b>	<b>08:55</b>	<b>09:05</b>	<b>08:55</b>	<b>08:45</b>	<b>09:05</b>
<b>Dismissal time:</b>	<b>15:15</b>	<b>15:20</b>	<b>15:15</b>	<b>15:20</b>	<b>15:25</b>	<b>15:25</b>
<b>arrive/leave:</b>	<b>main front gate</b>	<b>main front gate</b>	<b>pavil side gate</b>	<b>pavil side gate</b>	<b>main front gate</b>	<b>pavil side gate</b>

**Masks.**

We will continue with our tight system of safety controls in place but you will have seen that the Government have announced that in addition, face coverings should be worn in classrooms or during activities unless social distancing can be maintained. Given our large, busy classes, this means that students will be required to wear masks at all times in the buildings, **including lessons**. Please ensure your child brings their mask to school and a plastic bag to store it in. Students with medical exemption cards must have these on them at all times. We also recommend that all students should have their own supply of tissues.

We continue to update our risk assessment to ensure we operate as safely as possible in mitigating risks.

**Attendance.**

The Government announcement also clarified that from 8th March, school attendance will be mandatory for all pupils. The usual rules on school attendance apply, including parents' duty to secure their child's regular attendance at school (where the child is a registered pupil at school and they are of compulsory school age). Please continue to use our usual absence line to report absences. If you have any concerns or worries about your child feeling anxious about coming back to school, please contact their form tutor in the first instance so that we can discuss ways that we can support.

**Clinically Extremely Vulnerable Pupils**

The DfE state there is growing evidence that many children identified at the start of the pandemic as clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) are not at increased risk of serious outcomes from coronavirus (COVID-19) and children are gradually being removed from the shielding patient list (SPL) as appropriate, following review with a clinician. However, the advice for pupils who are still confirmed as clinically extremely vulnerable is to shield and stay at home as much as possible until further notice. These pupils will have received a letter to confirm this from their GP or the NHS and they are advised not to attend school while shielding advice applies nationally. We ask parents and carers to contact the school if their child falls in this category to discuss how we can best support your child. This shielding guidance applies to clinically extremely vulnerable individuals only. Students living in a household with someone who is clinically extremely vulnerable are not advised to follow this guidance and should attend school.

**Visitors.**

We continue to operate visitors only by prior appointment please. Where possible, please communicate with us by phone or email. Whilst we love seeing you face to face, we have to ensure there is no unnecessary additional contact or added risk to anybody in our community. Please would parents also avoid congregating at the school gates.

**Expectations.**

On return to school, we continue to have high expectations in regard to behaviour, uniform and work ethic in school. It has been a challenging time and also one in which inevitably, structure and routine has suffered for many students and we expect all to follow rules and reasonable instructions from the start, to ensure we can maintain safe practices and focus on our core business. This will enable our young people to focus on their precious face to face education with confidence and enjoyment. We will be running remote assemblies in the first week to remind students of our safety protocols in school. Please prepare your child by ensuring uniform, footwear, hair colour/style and jewellery all meet our uniform policy and that they are fully equipped for learning without the need to hand out equipment, which is to be avoided in the on-going circumstances. We pride ourselves on our relationships with you; please support us by ensuring that all pupils are clear on expectations when we start back.

**If your child has symptoms.**

If your child or anyone in the household develops symptoms, they will need to self-isolate immediately, not come to school and book a PCR test. The main symptoms are:

- a high temperature
- a new continuous cough
- a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste

For most of the confirmed cases, the symptoms have not necessarily been one of the 'official three' but rather a significant headache, fuzzy head or sore throat. Given that, we would suggest that if any of your children get one of these symptoms that they get a test. We think that the list of symptoms on the American equivalent of our PHE is far more useful than the official UK 3.

People with these symptoms may have COVID-19:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhoea

This list does not include all possible symptoms.

(Taken from <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html> )

Finally, please note that under the circumstances, we have cancelled the Early Riser staff training that was calendared for Friday 12th March and this will be a 'normal' day of lessons for students.

Sending you all very best wishes for a brighter future ahead of us. We look forward to seeing you all in due course.

Yours faithfully



**Vicky Willis**  
**Headteacher**