

4 March 2021

Dear Parents

We are delighted to be welcoming back our students, beginning with Year 11 and Year 13 for their Lateral Flow Testing tomorrow. The school has been a strange place over recent months and it will be wonderful to see and hear your boys around the school site once again, no doubt providing great company, humour and inspiration. There is plenty of information to share this morning so I will dive straight in.

School return

- Year 11 and Year 13 will start their testing tomorrow before returning to school on Monday 8 March.
- The rest of the school will be tested during the following week, with a full return for all other year groups on Monday 15 March.
- Remote teaching will continue in the week commencing 8 March (with the exception of when a year group is being tested).

We have taken this approach to minimise disruption to lessons whilst conducting around 5,000 tests. Of course, there will still be some disruption in the week commencing 15 March, but we wanted to keep the disruption of lessons to one week rather than two.

Testing questions

Many thanks indeed to many of you who have already signed the consent form for the Lateral Flow Tests. **We must have these complete for your son to take part**, click here to sign the [consent form](#) It is not compulsory and students are able to return to school without the tests but we would encourage all to take part.

Thank you very much for supporting us in this process, we appreciate it is a significant impingement on your time and commitments to ask you to bring in your son for the testing during this week (often more than once). Thank you in advance, we are aiming to make the site as safe as possible for the return.

Students need to have 3 LFTs before they can begin home testing. Details of home testing will be shared next week.

No uniform is required for the testing, but please bring a coat for wet weather.

The consent form has been updated and I amended this on Tuesday evening. To see the latest form please click [here](#). There is no need to complete the form again but please get in touch with me if you want to remove your consent. The main change is that we will not be daily testing close contacts (as originally proposed by the government); instead they will isolate for 10 days.

Uniform

I have witnessed my own children become giants (relative to me, which is probably still very small) during the last 12 months. We want all our students to be returning in uniform, but we understand that it may not have been possible to source certain items of clothing and some students will not have perfectly fitting blazers for example. If this applies to your son, please do send him in with a note for his form tutor; we understand the situation.

PE Kit

Students are to attend school in their PE Kit on days when they have a Games session or a PE lesson. Please ensure that tracksuits are school branded or of sober colour.

Attendance

We are very pleased to see the students back. However, we do not want boys on site if they are exhibiting any of the seven symptoms, and we will be supportive and understanding of any absence. To assist in this process, we must have daily notification of any absence so that we continue to discharge our safeguarding duties as we are bound to do by Government guidance.

Symptoms

Students and staff must not attend school if they have any of the symptoms detailed below. If students or staff are already on the school site, they should excuse themselves and see Matron who will be able to help.

Students and staff should also not attend school if **anyone in your household** is exhibiting these symptoms, until they are in receipt of a negative PCR test.

Main symptoms

- High temperature – you feel hot to touch on your chest or back
- A new continuous cough - coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours
- A loss or change to your sense of smell or taste

Isolation

If students or staff develop symptoms we are recommending they should isolate for 14 days from either the onset of symptoms or the date of test if they do not have symptoms. Any close contacts (people they live with or have been within 2 metres of must isolate from the time of contact for 10 days, unless they develop symptoms in which case they should be tested. If they receive a negative test, they must continue to isolate. If they receive a positive test, we ask that they isolate for 14 days from the onset of symptoms. We are recommending 14 days, above and beyond the 10-day Government Guidance, to ensure our community is as safe as it can be. However, this is only our recommendation; you must in all cases of isolation not return before 10 days.

Masks

As before lockdown, we will ask all staff and pupils to wear face coverings when moving around the premises outside 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. We will also continue to recommend that face coverings are 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.

These measures will be in place at RGS at least until Easter.

Face visors or shields should not be worn as an alternative to face coverings. They may protect against droplet spread in specific circumstances but are unlikely to be effective in reducing aerosol transmission when used without an additional face covering.

Please remind your son of the safe wearing of face coverings. This requires the:

- cleaning of hands before and after touching – including to remove or put it on. Students should not touch the front of their face covering during use or when removing it.
- safe storage of said mask in individual, sealable plastic bags between use.

Where a face covering becomes damp, it should not be worn, and the face covering should be replaced carefully. Staff and pupils may consider bringing a spare face covering to wear if their face covering becomes damp during the day.

Hand Hygiene

Coronavirus (COVID-19) is an easy virus to kill when it is on skin. This can be done with soap and water or hand sanitiser.

We have many hand sanitiser points around the school site and each classroom will have refreshed hand sanitiser bottles. Please ensure students clean their hands regularly, including:

- when they arrive at the school
- when they return from breaks
- when they change rooms
- before and after eating

We will also provide tissues for boys and operate a strict 'catch it, bin it, kill it' policy.

Social Distancing

Whatever the size of the group, students should be kept apart from other groups **where possible**. Furthermore, we will also encourage students to keep their distance within groups. We will, to the best of our ability in a working school, limit interaction, sharing of rooms and social spaces between groups as much as possible. Staff will maintain distance from their students, staying at the front of the class, and away from their colleagues where possible. Ideally, adults should maintain a 2-metre distance from each other and from children.

We will not run assemblies or performances until Government guidance says we can do so.

Sharing of Resources

For individual and very frequently used equipment, such as pencils and pens, staff and students should have their own items. Students and teachers can take books and other shared resources home, although unnecessary sharing should be avoided.

Ventilation

We will continue to use open windows and doors (although not fire doors) to ventilate classrooms and school buildings. We will use lesson breaks to 'purge' classrooms. As the weather becomes warmer this is much easier, but as before lockdown, please do wear a warm coat on a cold day.

Catering

We will continue to run a full catering service, managing this by a Year Group rota system and increased cleaning between Year Groups. Please encourage students to take note of who they spend their social time with which makes Track and Trace much more accurate.

Buses

The school buses will run and have all received guidance on how to ensure safe practice. Students must always wear masks on buses, must always sit according to the seating plans created before Christmas and should practice hand hygiene.

Apologies for such a long letter, but there is plenty of news to share as we prepare for a busy testing fortnight and more importantly welcoming your sons back to their RGS. We would like to take this opportunity to once again thank you for the tremendous support you have given your sons and the School. We are incredibly grateful.

Kind regards

Alex Wallace
Deputy Headmaster