

RIPLEY ST THOMAS

CHURCH OF ENGLAND ACADEMY

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26 February 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

I must firstly apologise for the length of this letter. As you can imagine there is quite a lot to tell you after a number of announcements this week.

Return to School

Testing Appointments: Monday - Wednesday

We are delighted that we will soon be able to welcome back pupils to school. The DFE have announced a return date from Monday 8 March and have allowed secondary schools the flexibility to stagger pupils' return over that week to enable us to test pupils.

In order to make the return to school as safe as possible and to enable us to pick up any asymptomatic cases, we will be offering Lateral Flow Tests to all pupils prior to their return to school. These tests are quick and easy to administer. Those of us who have been doing them for a while now have got used to them very quickly.

Mr Gomersall has written separately to parents regarding the lateral flow testing. We plan to test pupils on Monday 8, Tuesday 9 and Wednesday 10 March. On these days, pupils will come into school at an allocated time for their test and then return home immediately.

Could I ask that all parents read Mr Gomersall's letter and complete the electronic form to enable us to make individual appointments if you consent to your child taking one of these Lateral Flow Tests. This will enable us to plan the testing efficiently. You will also need to complete the consent form, included with Mr Gomersall's letter, which your child must bring to their appointment.

Return for all: Thursday

Pupils in all year groups will be able to return to school on **Thursday 11 March**, as long as their test is negative. They will be offered their second and third tests over the coming days and after that they will be given tests to complete twice weekly at home. Further information about home testing will be given out in due course.

If you do not consent for your child to be tested, they will be able to return to school on Thursday 11 March.

Key Worker and Vulnerable Pupils

School will be open for key worker and vulnerable pupils as usual between Monday 8 March and Wednesday 10 March.

Risk Assessment and Systems of Control

Next week we will share our revised Risk Assessment which will give further information about our control measures for keeping our whole school community as safe as possible.

Believe.....

Principal Mrs C Walmsley
Chair of Governors Mrs J Garnett

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Sixth Form Students

In the interests of the health and safety of the school community and the wider community, Sixth Form students will not be allowed to go off site during the school day. This includes break and lunchtime and during enrichment time. Students will be required to be in school from 9.10am until 3pm each day. The Sixth Form canteen will be open at lunchtime and students may choose to bring a packed lunch and any other refreshments.

School Uniform

We will be expecting all pupils to return to school looking smart. Please can you take the time next week to check that your child's school uniform and their school shoes still fit. I'm sure there will have been some growth spurts since Christmas!

Lancaster Uniform and Leisurewear is open for online orders and we do have plenty of uniform at school if needed. We also have shoes that pupils can borrow in the interim. Please contact your child's Progress Leader or Mr P. Wilson via parentline for assistance.

PE Kit Requirements

We are looking forward to resuming PE lessons when we return to school w/b 8 March when pupils will be informed of the activities that they will be doing. In addition to shorts and socks, please can we ask boys to bring their rugby shirt, football boots and trainers for all PE lessons. Girls' PE kit requirements remain the same.

Relationships and Sex Education policy: parental consultation

Yesterday you should have received an email from Mr Gillthorpe regarding the current review of our Relationships and Sex Education policy. We would welcome any comments which you would like to make on the new policy, and yesterday's email details how you can express your views through our parental consultation survey. The deadline for submissions is Sunday 7 March.

Year 8 Parents' Evening

The Year 8 parents' evening scheduled for next week will be moved to the summer term. We will publish the revised date shortly.

Year 11 and Year 13 information

As you will have read in the news yesterday, OfQUAL and the DfE have released their outcomes of the consultations into the awarding of examination grades this summer. A brief summary of the news headlines is given below:

For Vocational and technical qualifications

- **Grades will be assessed by teachers or tutors** for vocational and technical qualifications (VTQ) and T Levels which are similar to GCSEs and A levels, and used for university or college places, as well as other general qualifications like the International Baccalaureate
- **Exams and assessments for occupational courses**, which lead directly to employment, will take place in line with public health measures
- **Exams and assessments for smaller VTQs**, such as Functional Skills qualifications, will continue in line with public health measures or remotely
- **Alternative arrangements** will be available for those who cannot access the assessments
- Students will only be **assessed on what they were taught**
- There will be checks from schools, colleges and awarding organisations **to ensure fairness for pupils**
- Results days for VTQs used to enter college or university will take place **in the week of 9 August** in line with A levels and GCSEs
- Every student will **have the right to appeal** their teacher-assessed grade

For GCSE, AS and A levels

- Students will receive **grades determined by teachers**
- **Teachers will be given clear guidance** on using a range of evidence to assess pupils including coursework and optional questions from exam boards that teachers can use
- Students will only be assessed on **what they were taught**
- There will be multiple checks from schools, colleges and exam boards **to ensure fairness for pupils**
- Every student will have the **right to appeal their grade**
- GCSE and A level results days will take place **in the week of 9 August**

The Trust group of schools will be considering these documents over the coming days. We anticipate a raft of advice from other sources, such as examination board and professional associations. We shall be reflecting upon all this guidance when formulating our Trust approach to Teacher Assessed Grades. A Trust-wide approach will ensure consistency in the awarding of grades and confidence in the accuracy of the final grade. Whilst the Trust approach is being developed and refined we will not be able to answer individual questions and queries about summer examination grades but shall keep you informed of developments later this term and into the summer.

Again, apologies for the raft of information. We will be in touch again before the end of next week with further information regarding routines for returning to school, our risk assessment and lateral flow testing.

Yours sincerely,



Mrs C Walmsley
Principal