

RIPLEY ST THOMAS

CHURCH OF ENGLAND ACADEMY

ripleystthomas.com
Ashton Road Lancaster LA1 4RS



01524 64496
admin@ripley.lancs.sch.uk

5 March 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

As we approach the end of our (hopefully) final week of lockdown, I would like to pass on my thanks to you all. It is no mean feat juggling home schooling, family life and work. I'm sure we're all relieved to be getting back to (nearly) normal again. We're really looking forward to welcoming everyone back and we hope your child is looking forward to it as well. If they are particularly anxious about the return to school, please do let us know so we can support them.

Face Coverings

As you will be aware, the government has updated its guidance on face coverings in education settings. At Ripley, we will be following the government guidance to keep staff and students as safe as possible. Face coverings will continue to be worn in communal areas and corridors. In addition, once pupils return to school on Thursday 11 March, it is expected that face coverings are also worn in classrooms where social distancing cannot be maintained. This applies to staff and students unless a medical exemption applies. If you believe your child is medically exempt and you haven't already let us know, please contact your child's Progress Leader who will be able to issue an exemption card or lanyard. This additional measure will be reviewed at Easter.

The new guidance states that face coverings do not need to be worn outside. This means pupils will get a break from wearing their face masks at break and lunchtimes. We do recommend that pupils wear them if they are standing in close face-to-face contact with their friends outside as an extra level of protection, although this is optional.

Risk Assessment

The risk assessment for our reopening can be found on our school website in the policies and COVID-19 sections.

Symptoms and Track & Trace

Once pupils return to school, we will be expected to resume track and trace for close contacts of positive cases.

Please do not send your child to school if they have a continuous cough, a high temperature or a loss of taste or smell. If you are not sure, please keep your child off school and book a test. If the test is negative, they can return immediately.

If your child tests positive, please inform us immediately using the following email address: positivetest@ripley.lancs.sch.uk.

Lateral Flow testing

Thank you to all of you who have booked your child in for their lateral flow tests which are taking place on Monday – Wednesday next week. Please see Mr Gomersall's email regarding the plan for next week. The test centre is very impressive, although we will be very glad to get our gym back to normal!

Please do reassure your child if they are feeling nervous about the test. It is very straightforward, the trained staff are incredibly helpful and it's over and done with very quickly.

Believe.....

Principal Mrs C Walmsley
Chair of Governors Mrs J Garnett

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School Transport

We have been in touch with our many transport providers to inform them that school will reopen for all pupils on Thursday 11 March. I anticipate that the usual buses will therefore run at their regular times and on their specified routes. This also means that at the end of the school day the two-wave system will resume. Those pupils on second wave should wait in the quads while those on first wave should go directly to the black gates and wait for staff to call their bus number.

High Expectations

Mr P. Wilson has produced a presentation regarding our expectations of pupils on their return to school next week in terms of our school rules and our routines. Please ensure you and your child access and watch this via Firefly so that we can all make a smooth and positive return on Thursday 11 March.

Equipment

In readiness for pupils returning to school, please could I ask you to check that your child has the necessary equipment. We want to avoid the necessity for pupils to be sharing regularly used equipment with their peers and staff. A list of the basic equipment can be found below.

- Journal
- Blue/black pen
- Green pen
- Pencil
- Ruler
- Rubber
- Whiteboard pen
- Glue stick
- Mini whiteboard

Opening of the school stationery shop will be disrupted in the next couple of weeks as staff are directed to support the testing programme.

Pupils must also bring a **reading book** to school each day. As you know, reading is something we value very highly and there are times when we will ask pupils to read when waiting for their teacher or during their form period.

Year 11 and Year 13

We are receiving lots of questions from Y11 & Y13 students and parents regarding the teacher assessed grades. Please reassure your child that their focus for now needs to be on returning to school positively, working hard in lessons and completing every piece of work their teacher sets them to the best of their abilities.

Please rest assured that we are working hard to put our systems for the teacher assessed grades process in place and we will communicate this with you and with students as soon as possible.

Testing for parents

Please see below some information we have been asked to share with you regarding this:

Asymptomatic testing information for parents and adults in households with children at school or college

NHS Test and Trace announced earlier this week that all adults in households with school and college age children without symptoms can now access regular rapid coronavirus (COVID-19) testing.

Test kits can either be collected or ordered online, as set out below. Schools are not able to give out test kits to parents, carers or household members and should not order more test kits for this purpose. Secondary school and college students will continue to access testing through their school or college.

Undertaking regular, rapid coronavirus (COVID-19) testing helps reduce transmission of the virus. Parents and other adults in households with children at school or college, who do not have symptoms, can now access regular, rapid coronavirus (COVID-19) testing. This includes childcare and support bubbles.

Tests are fast, easy and completely free. There are [different ways](#) for a household, childcare or support bubble to collect their test to take at home, twice-weekly:

- through your employer, if they offer testing to employees
- by collecting a home test kit from a local test site – anyone aged 18 or over can collect 2 packs of 7 tests
- by ordering a home test kit online – please do not order online if you can access testing through other routes, this frees up home delivery for those who need it most

If you have any queries about the tests, and you live in England, please call 119 (free from mobiles and landlines). Lines are open every day from 7am to 11pm.

Children of primary school age (and below) without symptoms are not being asked to take a test. Testing is voluntary, but strongly recommended to all who are eligible. Alongside the vaccine, washing hands, wearing face coverings, and maintaining social distancing, rapid testing plays a vital role in reducing transmission rates. Getting into the habit of regular testing as part of our everyday lives will help us all to play our part and do what we can to protect each other.

And finally...

I hope you all have a good weekend enjoying the signs of spring and I will be praying for all members of our Ripley family in anticipation of us joining back together again next week.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C Walmsley', written in a cursive style.

Mrs C Walmsley
Principal