



Friday 26 February 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

My letter to you this week is largely devoted to outlining the arrangements for the reopening of our school from Monday 8 March 2021. Before I get to that topic a few words on yesterday's news.

Awarding of GCSE, BTEC and A level Grades in 2021

You will be aware that the Department for Education has announced that 'students will receive grades that will be awarded and determined by teachers, with pupils only assessed on what they have been taught. No algorithms will be used'.

We also know that schools will have until Friday 18 June to submit grades to the examination boards – great news because this extends how much time we normally have with our students. We understand that results days are likely to be different but they will take place on Tuesday 10 and Thursday 12 August. Once we have received and fully digested the detail of this outline we will again be in touch with year 11 and 13 students, parents and carers who are affected. We hope to write to those year groups in the next week in greater depth.

Whilst there have been no announcements about the impact of the pandemic on GCSE, BTEC and A level examinations in 2022, we wish to reassure students and families in years 10 and 12 that they are not forgotten and they also have good reason to seek greater clarity in the weeks and months ahead.

The Reopening of our School

I shall begin this section with a short(ish) summary, followed by the questions we feel families are most likely to ask as a result of this letter. You will be aware that the reopening of schools is linked to a mass testing programme. These programmes, operating in all secondary schools, are designed to detect asymptomatic cases of COVID-19 and, therefore, reduce transmission rates across our community.

It is, therefore, very important to once again stress that if a student (or colleague) has any of [the COVID-19 symptoms](#) then they must remain at home and [book an immediate PCR test](#). The entire household *must* self-isolate until the result of the PCR test is known.

Please, ensure your child does not attend school if they have: a high temperature; a new, continuous cough; or a loss or change to their sense of smell or taste. PCR tests can be booked very quickly and the turnaround time for results is very rapid indeed.

Continued...

I ought to remind you that there is a full risk assessment and dedicated webpage that covers all the other ways we are keeping our students, staff and site safe during the pandemic and this can be accessed [via this link](#) and covers a very wide range of topics.

A Summary of Our Reopening

Students in years 11, 12 and 13 will all return to school and normal face-to-face lessons on Monday 8 March:

- Throughout their first day back, these three year groups will take the first of their three lateral flow tests; the second and third taking place on Thursday 11 and Tuesday 16 March.
- Meanwhile, students in years 7 to 10 will continue with remote learning at home.
- On their first day back (only), students in years 11, 12 and 13 will not be permitted to socialise at break time.
- There will be no practical PE lessons for year 11s on 8 March.
- All returning students will continue to arrive, move and exit in the same year group zones that they used in the autumn term.

Students in years 9 and 10 will all return to school and normal face-to-face lessons on Tuesday 9 March:

- Throughout their first day back, these two year groups will take the first of their three lateral flow tests; their second and third tests taking place on Friday 12 and Wednesday 17 March.
- Meanwhile, students in years 7 to 8 will continue with remote learning at home.
- On their first day back (only), students in years 9 and 10 will not be permitted to socialise at break time.
- There will be no practical PE lessons for years 9 and 10 on 9 March.
- All returning students will continue to arrive, move and exit in the same year group zones that they used in the autumn term.

Students in years 7 and 8 will all return to school and normal face-to-face lessons on Wednesday 10 March:

- Throughout their first day back, these two year groups will take the first of their three lateral flow tests; the second and third taking place on Monday 15 and Thursday 18 March.
- On their first day back (only), students in years 7 and 8 will not be permitted to socialise at break time.
- There will be no practical PE lessons for years 7 and 8 on 10 March.
- All returning students will continue to arrive, move and exit in the same year group zones that they used in the autumn term.

If a student tests positive using the lateral flow test then he or she will be required to isolate for ten days, along with all household members and any close contacts they have been near whilst in school.

Following the third lateral flow test in school, all students will be provided with a 'test at home kit' and will be very strongly encouraged to undertake twice weekly tests (Sundays and Wednesdays) and upload their results to the NHS test and trace service.

If you read on, you will see a series of questions that we anticipate you will be asking. If we have missed anything then please drop me an email on bdoherty@chippingnortonschool.org and I shall do my best to provide an answer, or direct you to someone who can.

Continued...

We are getting closer and we are nearly there! There is not room in this letter but I hope that you have seen the messages about World Book Week and that you and your children get involved and enjoy some of the things we have in store...

Yours faithfully



Mr Doherty

Headteacher

Anticipated Questions

We have grouped questions beneath one of six topics:

1. Lessons and learning;
2. Consent and assessment of risk;
3. Attendance;
4. School and home testing kits;
5. Transport;
6. Food and the canteen.

Topic: LESSONS AND LEARNING

How will lessons change for my children?

- Everything goes back to normal for year 11s, 12s and 13s on Monday 8 March. Their final remote lessons will take place on Friday 5 March.
- Everything goes back to normal for year 9s and 10s on Tuesday 9 March. Their final remote lessons will take place on Monday 8 March.
- Everything goes back to normal for year 7s and 8s on Wednesday 10 March. Their final remote lessons will take place on Tuesday 9 March.

Will afternoon registration with tutors continue?

The final afternoon registration with tutors will take place on Thursday 4 March 2021.

Will remote learning continue?

Remote learning will gradually come to an end for all students on Tuesday 9 March. There will be no live lessons on Friday 5 March, or afternoon registration with tutors, so that all staff may participate in a range of training events. However, remote learning activities will be set for **all** lessons on Friday 5 March, for **all** students in **all** year groups.

Will after school clubs, activities and Extra Time resume?

Yes - we are delighted to report that these can all get back to normal as well and they will also start to resume from Monday 15 March.

Topic: CONSENT AND ASSESSMENT OF RISK

What proportion of parents, carers and sixth formers have given consent?

With over one week to go, the figure currently stands at over 90% for years 7 to 11 and approaching 100% amongst sixth formers. Throughout next week, assistant heads of year will make direct contact with all parents and carers (for students in years 7 to 11) and sixth formers who have yet to provide consent. Testing is not compulsory but we will be requiring nil returns so that no one is left behind. Please complete [the consent form](#) if you have not done so already, to help save time for the assistant heads of year.

Does my child have to take part in the testing programme?

Testing is not mandatory, but we very, very strongly encourage all students to participate in order to protect their own health and the health of others. Asymptomatic testing will help reduce transmission rates and contribute to the suppression of the virus across the region.

Does my child HAVE to wear a face covering at all times?

Whilst wearing face coverings is not mandatory we do expect all students and staff to wear face coverings [in line with the Department for Education's guidance](#). They should be worn at all times, unless they can maintain at least two metres social distance. Practical PE and dance are exceptions, and in drama lessons that are strenuous. There may be exemptions for students. If you believe your child ought to be exempt, and have good reason, then please approach the head of year or assistant head of year without delay. We know that we all find wearing face coverings uncomfortable and annoying, but it also helps reduce the risk of us unknowingly passing on the virus to others.

Are vaccinated people exempt from wearing face coverings and maintaining social distancing?

No. Being vaccinated does not eliminate the risk of contracting the virus or becoming ill. Also, those who are vaccinated may nonetheless be asymptotically carrying and transmitting the virus to others.

Does a member of staff or a student need to take a lateral flow test if they have been vaccinated?

Yes. Those who are vaccinated may nonetheless be asymptotically carrying and transmitting the virus to others.

If my child has been tested positive for COVID-19 in the past, are they required to take the tests?

Any student or member of staff who has tested or tests positive for COVID-19 is not required or encouraged to take a lateral flow test for 90 days. If, for any reason, they do take the test and it does record a positive result then he or she MUST self-isolate for ten days. Similarly, if someone has recovered from COVID-19 and is identified as a close contact or a member of their household tests positive, they must also self-isolate for up to ten days and are not exempt from such restrictions on their movement.

Why are students being prevented from socialising at break times on their first day back?

We know this will be frustrating but it is only for one day. On day one we wish to reduce and restrict the number of social contacts your children have until the results of their first lateral flow test are known. Students will be required to remain in their period 2 seat during break 1, in their period 3 seat during break 2, and in their period 4 seat during break 3. This is to reduce the risk of transmission because we know from experience that students struggle to maintain 2 metres plus social distancing at break times.

Has the school updated its risk assessment to cover the March 2021 reopening of schools?

Yes, please [follow this link](#) to the updated part of our website.

Will the in school testing process be COVID secure?

Yes, please [follow this link](#) to the updated part of our website that deals with these very issues. The school adopts the standard operating procedures that are required in all test centres across England.

Topic: ATTENDANCE

Does my child have to return to school?

Yes. The Department of Education has made it very clear that attendance is mandatory once we reopen. Bearing in mind the questions (and answers) below, this means that it is a legal requirement on parents, carers and schools to ensure that all children are back at CNS on or by Thursday 11 March at the latest. Any further questions on this matter should be directed towards the appropriate head of year without delay.

What happens if my son or daughter is absent on the day of their test?

We cannot run extra tests for those who are absent. However, there are three tests for all students over the first seven school days they return - we would be concerned if a student missed more than one of these days. We shall run a single catch-up session on Friday 19 March for any student that misses their third and final test.

Why are the oldest students returning first?

The Department for Education has advised that students in years 10 to 13 return first, followed by younger students.

Why are some schools bringing in students for their test and then sending them straight home?

Schools are being given the freedom to decide whether or not to permit students back into school until they have recorded a negative test result. Schools with little or no reliance on school buses are more likely to test students and then send them straight home on day one, and then welcome them back to normal lessons on day 2 - assuming they have a negative test result. We do not believe this will be possible or practical for our community and this is why our students, like many others in England, will return to normal lessons AND be tested on the same day.

Can I keep my child at home until their year group have all been tested?

Yes. If a student, parent or carer would prefer to be tested on day one (i.e. 8, 9 or 10 March) and return to school on day two, then this is permissible. Please approach the appropriate head of year to discuss and make arrangements.

Are sixth formers permitted to arrive late or go home early on their first day back (8 March)?

No. We do realise that every sixth former will have at least one study period on the first day back. We also know that they have been used to arriving late if that first lesson is not until period 2 or 3, or going home early if their final lesson is period 3 or 4. The difficulty is that we cannot accommodate sixth formers' timetables in our plan for the roll out of testing on day one, four and seven. This means that every sixth former must attend school from 8:40am on 8, 11 and 16 March, but they are permitted to go home early on those days once they have received their test result and

have attended their final lesson of the day. On all other days when testing of sixth formers does not take place then the system that was in operation in the late autumn term will resume.

Will staff be returning on Monday 8 March?

Yes. All teaching and non-teaching staff will return to normal on 8 March. This will ensure that teachers can deliver face-to-face lessons to students as they return, but also teach live lessons from their normal classroom and be with the children who currently attend the hubs.

Will the hubs remain open to vulnerable and key worker children?

No. On Monday 8 and Tuesday 9 March, all students who are currently attending each day will instead go to their tutor room and their five timetabled lessons, in the rooms they used in the autumn term. They will be registered and taught by their tutor, and then their five teachers, face-to-face!

Topic: SCHOOL and HOME TESTING KITS

How will my son or daughter be guided on how to swab correctly?

We ask all families to study the poster that is attached to this letter. In addition, we shall use the registration period on each day of testing to remind students how to swab correctly. In addition, the assistant heads of year and heads of year will be on hand to guide and direct. It is likely that there will be a national campaign to reassure and guide students on TV. In addition, please follow this link to our dedicated webpage and note the leaflet on how to swab correctly.

Can you tell us more about home testing kits?

More information on this is due in the next few days, but note the booklet provided by the NHS that appears on [our dedicated webpage here](#). We expect to distribute packs of seven devices directly to your children week beginning 15 March and will accompany that with further communication. By that point, your children will have undertaken three tests in school and so they will be very familiar with how to swab their tonsils / tonsil area and their nostril. Staff and students are going to be asked to carry out their test every Sunday and Wednesday evening. If you would like to collect the test at home kits yourself then please contact the assistant head of year to make your own arrangements from 15 March.

Topic: ON SITE TESTING AND RESULTS

What happens when a student is tested on site?

Assuming consent has been given, a group of students will be collected from their lesson and escorted towards the school hall - where we have set up our temporary testing centre. Students will walk towards and then queue two metres apart and, one at a time, be invited to provide a swab sample in one of our private booths. They will be shown how to swab their tonsils / tonsil area and one nostril before carefully dropping the swab into a special vial / mini test tube. And that's it - in and out in less than 3-5 minutes.

How quickly will the results of the test arrive?

Approximately 30-60 minutes after the swab sample is provided the result will be uploaded to the NHS test and trace service. This triggers an instantaneous email and text message to the address and phone number that has been provided on the online consent form. This means that sixth formers will receive their own result (not their parents or carers), but all other students' results will be sent to a parent's or carer's email address and phone number. We ask that parents and carers do not

message their children with the result – this will be a needless distraction and may result in their phone being confiscated if it disturbs a lesson. It is important to be aware that if a test is void or positive then the student will be informed before the result is uploaded to the NHS test and trace service.

What if my child has a negative, void or positive result?

- If the result is **negative**, then we do not 'tell' the student and instead leave it to the NHS test and trace service to ping that notification.
- If the result is **void**, then we will ask your son or daughter to go through the process again.
- If the result is **positive**, then your son or daughter will be told, isolated and picked up by you and begin a period of isolation lasting ten days. In addition, their entire household will be required to isolate for ten days, along with any of their close contacts. In such cases, we shall call you at the same time that you receive that notification ping.

Are CNS staff being tested?

We have been testing staff on site twice per week since January. From Monday 8 March, all staff in schools in England will test themselves at home, twice each week, every Sunday and Wednesday. We do not know how long these home tests will be in use but expect them to continue well into the summer term.

Topic: TRANSPORT

Will the school buses be running?

Yes, from March 8 all school bus services will resume as normal.

Topic: FOOD AND THE CANTEEN

Will the school canteen services resume?

Yes, this will operate as it did throughout the autumn term. Please look out for the link to order food on our website. If you have any difficulties please contact the finance team on finance@chippingnortonschool.org