

Ref: GWA/LWO

25 February 2021



Dear Families

Return to school arrangements

As promised, I am now in a more informed position to share more detail about a return to school, so offer you my second of what I anticipate to be at least three updates of increasing complexity during the course of this week and next.

The Prime Minister, when he spoke to the nation earlier this week, was careful not to furnish you with all the facts but only the populist headline of all children returning to schools on March 8. Understandably, this will have sat well with the overwhelming majority of parents and children across the land and been greeted with a huge sigh of relief. He has left the difficult messages to be delivered by schools! The issues are illustrated in this newspaper [article](#).

The operational details, released by the Department for Education on Tuesday evening, made the full reopening of schools on March 8 frankly impossible. **ALL** school children, with consenting parents, and members of staff have to receive a negative lateral flow test result before returning to face to face lessons and these tests will be conducted in schools. Students are to be offered **three** in-school lateral flow tests over the first two weeks before being provided with test kits to be administered at home. Some [details of testing](#) have already been shared previously but more will follow in due course particularly in relation to home testing. If you have not already given your consent, please register your consent or lack of consent by clicking [here](#).

The implications of mass testing of 1500 individuals would have meant that full school operation could not have started until March 15 at the earliest. However, following representations from headteachers, yesterday's Government guidance indicated that schools can begin that testing programme earlier and, in our case, **from Monday 1 March**. I am delighted with this change which does now mean that, with your support, we will be able to have all children back on March 8. In order to facilitate a full return to school from March 8, therefore, we will be testing your child(ren) **twice** next week according to the schedule below.

Students will be invited in for tests and then expected to return home. If we waited until March 8 to begin testing then the school would not be able to operate fully until March 15.

You will soon receive a separate personalised email giving an appointment time within the times stated below. Students, wearing face masks, should report to the Drama Hall for their test. If you are driving in, please park in the main car park at the East Gate and remain in your car whilst your child is tested.

	Test 1	Test 2
Year 7	01/03/2021 09:00 - 11:00	04/03/2021 09:00 - 11:00
Year 8	01/03/2021 11:00 - 14:00	04/03/2021 11:00 - 14:00
Year 9	01/03/2021 14:00 - 16:25	04/03/2021 14:00 - 16:25
Year 10	02/03/2021 09:00 - 11:00	05/03/2021 09:00 - 11:00
Year 11	02/03/2021 11:00 - 14:00	05/03/2021 11:00 - 14:00
Year 12	02/03/2021 14:00 - 15:25	05/03/2021 14:00 - 15:25
Year 13	02/03/2021 - 15:25 - 16:20	05/03/2021 15:25 - 16:20

Ashchurch Road, Tewkesbury
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Reception: **01684 292152**
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Website: **www.tewkesburyschool.org**

Headteacher: **Mr G M Watson** BSc PGDip NPQH

Whilst I appreciate there is a degree of inconvenience, only by bringing the testing forward in this way can we safely get your children back into school from March 8.

Members of staff, too, are also required to test themselves twice per week and for that reason they will be expected to be in school on Friday 5 March. As a consequence, there will be no live lessons for your children next Friday, with all staff in school to complete tests and prepare resources for the following week. Teachers will ensure that work is set for your children on ClassCharts to cover that shorter school day and students will still be expected to complete and submit work in line with instructions from their teacher

Arrangements for **mini-school** and for the continued education of children of critical workers, vulnerable children and those with additional needs will remain the same with these youngsters continuing to be routinely tested as they have been since January.

As stated at the outset, I intend to send a further update next week which will outline the exact nature of return times to school and provide further details on the operation of testing and home testing. Next week, I will also be updating the families of Y11 and Y13 students in relation to examinations and assessments. I appreciate the above arrangements may cause those of you living in outlying villages a particular problem with getting your child to and from school for Covid tests. If that is the case, please can I ask you, in the first instance to complete this brief [form](#). If you need to discuss this, please contact our administration team on office@tewkesburyschool.org to arrange a call back to you.

These are difficult messages for me to convey but I think it is better that you know sooner rather than later some of the challenges we face and the impact on you and your children.

With sincere best wishes to you and your families.



Mr G M Watson
Headteacher

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