

Ref: GWA/LWO

4 March 2021



Dear Families

### **Return to school arrangements - Monday 8 March 2021**

Welcome to my third and final update prior to the return of your children on Monday 8 March. It remains my intention to write separately to Y11 and Y13 students and parents in relation to forthcoming exams and assessments after I have spoken directly to key members of staff in school tomorrow.

### **Mass Testing**

This week has seen our mass testing programme kick into action and children successfully tested twice. The number of parents withholding consent has been tiny and the first test yielded only one positive result for a child displaying no symptoms. **97% of all students were tested (the equivalent of 1,287 children) with only a small number missing appointments.** The most recent data indicates that in the last week of February there were 27 positive Covid cases per 100,000 people in our area compared to a national average of 77.

Students will receive their third test in school early next week and, thereafter, be provided with home testing kits and instructions to avoid them having to be extracted from lessons to undertake that task. I am grateful to you and to our fantastic army of testers for making this happen so smoothly and thus enabling all children to return to school next week. You will receive further information in relation to carrying out tests at home next week.

### **Return to School**

When they return, children will encounter the same regime they faced when they were last here with the added recommendation that face masks be worn in classrooms up until Easter when the Government will conduct a review. The same year group bubbles will be operating in the same social spaces and with the same lunchtime arrangements. One way systems that were present previously will remain in force as will the staggered start and finish times. I believe this consistency will help facilitate a smooth return to school and reduce anxiety. I anticipate reviewing these measures at Easter and, hopefully, moving to a more 'normal' arrangement thereafter.

Strong views have been expressed locally and nationally about the recommended wearing of face masks in classrooms with equally vociferous views expressed for and against. We will be following public health guidance and recommending that children wear face masks in lessons but this is not compulsory and there are no additional legal obligations on schools in the guidance.

Children are expected to attend on Monday 8 March, in full school uniform and with appropriate equipment in line with the following times, which are unchanged. Please ensure that your child has their lanyard. Replacement lanyards, as well as stationery items and ties can be ordered and paid for via the [school shop](#). Catering balances should be credited in advance as the cash top-up machines in school will remain out of use. Please also remind your children to bring personal headphones for music lessons as we cannot share equipment. School buses will run as normal and an email has already been sent to those transport users reminding them of the safety instructions.

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

Year	Arrival time	Departure time (Monday to Thursday)	Departure time Friday	Location
Year 7	8:30am	3:20pm	2:30pm	via West Gate (Flagpole)
Year 8	8:40am	3:20pm	2:30pm	via Central Gate (Bike Sheds)
Year 9	8:40am	3:20pm	2:30pm	via West Gate (Flagpole)
Year 10	9:00am	3:35pm	2:30pm	Via East Gate (Sixth Form)
Year 11	9:00am	3:35pm	2:30pm	Via Central Gate (Bike Sheds)
Year 12 & 13	8:40am	3:20pm	2:30pm	Via East Gate (Sixth Form)

Thank you to those of you who have already completed the [parent survey](#). The overwhelming response was positive with some lovely comments about members of staff which I know have been very much appreciated. We always strive to improve and welcome also your constructive comments which help us to do just that.

Chromebooks, too, have arrived, been set up and are in the process of being distributed. We are pleased to get these out before our original expectation of September and thank you for supporting this scheme. Parents not considering the scheme for purely financial reasons are, once again, strongly urged to contact the [Birmingham Education Learning Foundation](#), a charitable trust that underpins the scheme.

Our immediate priority, as stated previously, is re-engaging children in a safe environment and checking on their mental health and wellbeing. The successful integration of Chromebooks into the classroom will take some time so please do bear with us. A fantastic start has been made, however, as a result of the enforced need to upskill ourselves for successful remote learning. It was most reassuring to hear from so many of you that the online delivery of lessons had improved in the second lockdown.

We are all looking forward to getting back to the normal routines and rhythms of school next week and possibly offering you a little respite too!

With sincere best wishes to you and your families.



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**Headteacher**

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