

24th February 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

I am writing to you to give information about the full school reopening of Oakwood School. As you will no doubt have noticed from the Prime Minister's recent briefing, all students will be expected to return to school on Monday 8th March. To allow for this to happen effectively and to incorporate arrangement for Mass Testing, as laid out by the government guidance, schools will be allowed to adopt a phased return approach.

Current government proposals strongly encourage all students to be tested three times on their return to school and at least one negative test result must be received before allowing them to return, as per the recently published guidance for schools:

"Pupils should return to face-to-face education following their first negative test result."

Following completion of the three tests in school, lateral flow devices will be provided for students to take home and parents and family should self-administer the tests twice weekly. As indicated in yesterday's Parentmail we will provide further information regarding the self-administration of these tests at home and the subsequent submission of their results in due course.

Mass Testing in School

The proposed testing schedule for pupils will begin from Thursday 4th March, as per the table below. We wish to begin these tests early to ensure that they can be completed and all pupils can receive their first test result and hopefully return to school as soon as possible. Many schools have indicated concern about the amount of time and organisation the testing will take so I hope you will appreciate the speed and efficiency with which we are moving to implement this initiative.

Group	Date 1st Test	Date 2nd Test	Date 3rd Test
Year 11	Thursday 4th March	Monday 8th March (pm)	Thursday 11th March (pm)
Year 10	Friday 5th March	Tuesday 9th March (pm)	Friday 12th March (pm)
Year 7	Monday 8th March (am)	Thursday 11th March	Tuesday 16th March
Year 9	Tuesday 9th March	Friday 12th March	Wednesday 17th March
Year 8	Wednesday 10th March	Monday 15th March	Thursday 18th March

Students will be called to their test appointment in tutor groups, staggered throughout the day, and details of this will follow shortly. On Thursday the 4th March and Friday 5th March, Years 10 and 11 will come into school for their test and then return home to carry on Remote Learning. From Monday 8th March, Years 7, 10 and 11 will return. Year 7 will attend their allocated test appointment time and then remain in school after receiving a negative test result. Years 9 and 8 will return to school at their allocated testing time on Tuesday 9th March and Wednesday 10th March respectively and will remain in school after receiving a negative test result. This programme will, therefore, hopefully ensure that the entire school community is back in full swing by midday Wednesday 10th March. All students who are not in school prior to this time will still receive provision for Remote Learning*.

Achieving Excellence Together

*Please note that hard copies of Remote Learning work for those students who require them will be available up until Friday 26th February.

A sample of how a testing day will look like is included below for your information.

Monday 8th March	
Time	Group
8.00 - 9.00	Year 7 (3 tutor groups)
9.00 - 10.00	Year 7 (3 tutor groups)
10.00 - 10.15	Break
10.15 - 11.15	Year 7 (3 tutor groups)
11.15 - 12.15	Year 7 (2 tutor groups)
12.15 - 12.45	Break
12.45 - 13.45	Year 11 (called from class)
13.45 - 14.45	Year 11 (called from class)

Please could I urge parents to read the instructions around testing appointments carefully and to ensure that their child does not attend school prior to this time. The entire Senior Leadership Team will be permanently onsite from Wednesday 3rd March to ensure that all necessary preparations are complete and to support the smooth running of this complex process.

Tests cannot be administered without the return of a consent form which must be submitted by midday on Monday 1st March.

In the event of a positive test, due process and procedure will be followed by the school as it has been in the past, in order to send the identified case and any immediate close contacts home to self-isolate as soon as possible.

The timings of the school day

The timings of the school day will remain the same as they were prior to the last lockdown. The document detailing these is attached to this letter. Please note that Monday 8th March will be a Week B.

Please remember not to drop your child off on the school premises at the start/end of the school day and to not turn into Rosemary Lane end.

Please also support us by reminding your child to socially distance on the way to and from school, giving due consideration to other members of the public.

Zoning

So that the pupils have the least change and disruption, the zoning of the school will remain the same. The students will be familiar with the playgrounds they should go to when they arrive at school and use during breaktimes. They will be reminded of this on their arrival in school and by duty staff during break times.

School Uniform

Normal full school uniform must be worn. If your child has grown out of any uniform, please try to procure new items as soon as possible via the usual channels. Where classroom temperatures are low due to increased ventilation, students will be permitted to wear outdoor coats to ensure they remain warm. **Hoodies and sweatshirts will not be permitted as an alternative to this (this includes Oakwood P.E. sweatshirts and hoodies).** On days that a student has a PE lesson they may wear their PE kit for the full day. Please ensure that both you and your child are fully familiar with that day so they do not mistakenly or willingly don their PE kit unnecessarily. A student who does this may well be sent home to get changed.

Equipment

Please note the following guidance from the government:

“For individual and very frequently used equipment, such as pencils and pens, staff and pupils should have their own items.

Pupils should limit the amount of equipment they bring into school each day, including essentials such as:

- *lunch boxes*
- *hats and coats*
- *books*
- *stationery*
- *mobile phones*

Bags are allowed."

Please support us, therefore, by ensuring your child is correctly equipped for the school day as staff are clearly limited in the resources they are able to provide due to current restrictions. Mobile phones, MP3 players etc. will be confiscated if they are seen or used during the school day, in line with normal school rules.

Face coverings

The recommendations around the wearing of face coverings has changed:

"In addition, we now also recommend.....that face coverings should be worn in classrooms or during activities unless social distancing can be maintained.....These measures will be in place until Easter."

We will, therefore, ask that face coverings are worn in class unless a teacher gives specific permission for their temporary removal. Cases where this may happen are when the face covering is hindering educational progress, communication or the student is participating in a designated oral activity such as a speech or a Q&A session. Students that have been notified to the school accordingly will, of course, remain **exempt** from wearing face coverings.

Canteen service

The canteen will be providing its usual service for students and students at lunch time only. Students will need to bring their own snacks/refreshments for first break. They will be able to eat in their zone or designated areas within the canteen and/or hall. When students have finished eating they should replace their face coverings when indoors.

Exams guidance

We await this week the outcome of the joint consultation conducted by the Department for Education and Ofqual on this year's GCSE exams. We very much anticipate that this will provide some much needed clarity around the process which will be used to submit this year's GCSE grades. As soon as we are in receipt of this information, we will inform Parents, Carers and students of the arrangements for the submission of this year's grades together with any necessary assessment that will take place to inform. I am enormously appreciative of the hard work that has been undertaken by Year 11 students up to this point and wish to reassure them of our constant ongoing support at this uncertain time.

No screen day (Thursday 4th March)

I am delighted to announce that our next no screen day on the above date coincides with World Book Day. To this end two of our wonderful English teachers, Miss Bennett and Miss Johnson, will be circulating information for this event and I trust that all students will enjoy the activities and the much needed break from screen time.

Options 2021

The Options area for Year 9 and can be accessed via our school website from the morning of Thursday 25th February. I am very grateful to Mrs Dunford and all staff who have contributed to providing a wealth of really useful information to support our students in informing them about their GCSE option choices. Please take time to view and listen to the presentations carefully as they will be enormously helpful in informing your decisions.

In spite of the logistical challenges we currently face I can safely say that the entire staff body are genuinely excited about the prospect of a full school re-opening and the chance to greet our students once again. It goes without saying that we recognise how challenging recent weeks have been and I remain in full admiration of the resilience and support that parents and students alike have shown throughout the pandemic. Discussions have already begun about how we may best support our students upon their return and, as ever, we remain committed to ensuring that Oakwood School remains a happy, thriving and progressive institution. I will be joining staff in supporting students through the testing process and look forward, with excitement, to welcoming students back on the school gate from Monday 8th March. These have been trying times but the fortitude shown by the whole school community has ensured we are in great shape to enjoy better days ahead.

Onward and upward (as always)!

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S Potten', with a long horizontal line extending to the right from the end of the signature.

Mr S Potten
Headteacher