

23rd February 2021

Dear Parent / Carer,

I hope you and your family are well. Thank you for your continued support and understanding as we collectively handle the challenges posed by Covid-19.

You will no doubt have seen the Prime Minister's announcement last night that schools will re-open fully, for all students, from Monday 8th March, with testing in place for all students.

The Government has given secondary schools discretion as to how to phase the return to school over that week, and I will write to you shortly with further details about how we will do that but I wanted to give you as much information as possible to prepare for the weeks ahead.

We are looking forward very much to having all students back in our school, and want to assure you that – as has been the case throughout the coronavirus crisis – we will ensure the school is as safe as it possibly can be. Your child's health, and the health of all our students and staff, is the most important factor always for us.

There are a number of specific points about the full return to school that I wanted to set out in this letter, which I hope are helpful.

Testing

- All students will be consistently tested for Covid-19, using 'lateral flow tests'. It is not compulsory to take these tests but the Government's health advice is that effective testing helps stop the virus spreading and will mean schools are as safe as possible, so is strongly encouraging it.
- The Department for Education will shortly provide us with the testing kits, which can be taken at school or at home, and we will update you on the collection and delivery of these kits in due course.
- Once these tests are received:
 - Students will be tested by trained staff/volunteers three times at school in the first two weeks back.
 - After the first two weeks back at school, students will be provided with two rapid tests to use each week at home.
 - Students will be allowed to attend lessons as normal after their first negative result.
 - Parents and carers will be required to report results to schools to record. We will confirm how this system will operate in due course.
 - Students who develop Covid-19 symptoms should self-isolate immediately, as now, according to Government guidelines.
 - If a student tests positive for Covid-19, they must not attend school for at least 10 days from the day their symptoms started (or the date of their positive test if they were not showing symptoms).
 - The school will retain a "small" testing site for those unable to test at home, while all our staff will also be given twice weekly home tests.
- As mentioned, trained staff/volunteers will supervise tests taken at school. Lateral flow tests are quick and easy to administer, using a swab of your nose and throat. Results take around half an hour from testing and will be shared directly with staff

and pupils participating. For under-18s, staff can oversee the swab process. Where participants are under-16, parents or legal guardians will also be informed.

- We have been told to prioritise those year groups closest to GCSE and A level and envisage that we will bring Year 13- 11 back in first on the 8th March followed by Year 10 on Tuesday 9th, Year 9 Wednesday 10th, Year 8 Thursday 11th and Year 7 on Friday 12th so that we can be fully open to all year groups by the 12th March. We will give you exact details and arrangements for their testing and return in a separate letter. However, while students wait to be tested they will continue to receive “live lessons” via Google, then once on site “face to face” teaching will resume. As you can imagine testing around 1,200 people, three times in the space of two weeks will be logistically challenging, however students will be able to return following their first negative test.
- Consent - we need your consent to test and we are strongly encouraging all students to be tested. A consent form has been shared several times, many thanks to those parents that have completed this. However if you haven't already done so, please complete the consent form which has now been converted to a google form to make it easier. Please complete this by the **28th February**, as we will have to cross check every student and form completed and returned which, I am sure you can appreciate, takes time. I do not want to delay any student returning, so would ask you to support me with this. <https://forms.gle/ZsBjfRwNTKa7DsEM9>
- All information about testing is on the website. Ideally, we would like to test students on site however, if you wish to do this yourself prior to the return please ensure your test results are sent to speterson@ormistonriversacademy.co.uk

Masks

- The Government has recommended the use of face masks indoors – including in classrooms – unless two-metre social distancing can be maintained. This policy will be reviewed over the Easter Holidays so will be in place until at least the end of this term, and applies to students, staff and visitors (including parents), unless they are exempt from wearing one. If your child is ‘exempt’ we will require details around this and a separate google form will go out prior to the 8th March.
- We therefore encourage all students and parents to ensure they have a suitable number of face masks for the resumption of school on 8th March. As a school we have provided 1,000's of face coverings but need parents/carers to support us now with this, just as you would with stationery equipment.

Clubs and After-School Provision

- From Monday 8th March, after-school clubs can start to re-open. This includes sports and activity clubs. An enrichment timetable will be shared in due course and will start on the 15th March once all students have returned.

School logistics

- Last term's arrangements will continue to be in place, i.e. bubbles and staggered breaks and lunches. The school timings will go back to the original timetable from March 8th.

Uniform

- Full Uniform will be expected as before, students have time now to ensure that hair colour, nails etc. are following the school policy. If students have PE, they may attend school in PE kit as there are still no changing facilities. Windows will be open for extra ventilation so please ensure your child has warm layers. As we approach the summer this will be better, however we still have a number of colder weeks ahead of us.

School Attendance

- School attendance will be mandatory for all students once a year group has been tested. The usual rules and duties around school attendance are in place from 8th March (including mandatory attendance). The only exception is any student that is classed as clinically vulnerable and would have received a letter to state this. If this is the case, please forward this to our attendance team in advance of the return. If you have any attendance concerns or questions please contact tpenberthy@ormistonriversacademy.co.uk

The Government's announcement indicates that we are tentatively returning to normal. However, I wanted to reiterate how alert we are to the continued risk of Covid-19. We will continue to adhere to stringent health and safety measures now, and when fully open. Your support in helping us to keep as safe as possible is much appreciated and will help ensure that we are able to stay open to all students, whilst keeping your child/children, our staff, and you, safe.

I hope this letter is helpful and reassuring, but please let me know if you have any questions. I am available by email as always ebaker@ormistonriversacademy.co.uk

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'E Baker', enclosed within a large, loopy, horizontal oval stroke.

Mrs Emma Baker
Principal