

26 August 2021

Dear parents and carers,

I hope you are all well and are looking forward to your children returning to school shortly. Years 7 - 11 will return on Thursday 2 September, whilst Year 12/13 will return on Monday 6 September. In school, we are all delighted to be making plans for a safe return to school life. However, it is this point about school safety that I would like to address first.

Asymptomatic Testing

The Government and in particular the Department for Education, in consultation with Public Health England, has asked schools to support the safe return of students and staff through the provision of asymptomatic COVID-19 self-testing, as has been done on previous occasions in the academic year 2020/21.

To ensure this is done efficiently, effectively, safely and comfortably we have commissioned a Local Authority approved company, MIRIS International, to support the self-testing process. They were excellent when the testing was carried out prior to the summer holiday.

It is really important that students and staff consent to the self-testing in school, for the health and safety of all who attend school and their families. This is due to the nature of this virus, which presents no symptoms in around 30% of all infections, meaning asymptomatic people can be spreading the virus to other people unknowingly for days on end. This self-testing process can eliminate uncertainty and I would appeal to anyone and everyone returning to school to be self-tested. Students in Year 8 to 13 who have already provided consent last year do not need to do so again. Students coming into Year 7 will receive a separate request for consent to be tested for COVID-19.

Unlike the testing carried out prior to the summer holiday, positive cases within school should not result in other students being sent home to isolate. Instead, close contacts of positive cases identified in school will be advised to get a PCR test outside of school but will not be required to isolate unless this test then comes back positive.

Testing will start on Thursday 2nd September for students in Years 7-11 such that these students can return to full teaching that day. Then on Monday 6th September students in Years 7-11 will be re-tested and students in Years 12/13 will have their first test and return to full time lessons.

As you can see, we are planning an ambitious return to full teaching for all students in school. In order to achieve this ambitious plan, we need parents to support us in our efforts to complete the first stage of testing by discussing the self-testing process with your daughter or son. As previously stated, parents of Year 7 students will now need to provide consent for testing.

Face coverings

Students will be returning to school in their full school uniform but will not currently be required to wear a face covering in school. This will be kept under review as part of our ongoing mitigations in place within school. Face coverings are still required for travel on public transport and may also be requested in order to enter shops.

COVID-19 routine safety measures

I would like to reassure all members of our school community that whilst many rules regarding COVID have been relaxed, many are still in place within school. Social distancing will remain in place with 2 metre safe zones between staff and students in class. Classrooms will be appropriately ventilated by having sash windows open and doors open onto corridors. Our classrooms have carbon dioxide sensors to warn of poor ventilation, should this be an issue. Hand gel is provided in class and on corridors. Year groups will be registered in year group bases, reducing contact between the different age groups of students. Face masks are available for any students or staff who wish to wear one. Home test kits will continue to be provided through school until the Department for Education advises otherwise and I would encourage everyone to continue to use these for their own safety and peace of mind (all new test kits are nasal swabs only, not throat and nose swabs).

I am sure you are as concerned as I am with the rising number of cases in Liverpool and across the country. However, these cases are mostly community transmission and often due to large-scale events such as festivals and other large gatherings. Cases within school last year were low and we aim to ensure that remains the case again this year, with your support. Whatever happens, our primary aim is to keep your children safe whilst providing an excellent and enjoyable educational experience, so we can teach them what is necessary for life.

Best wishes,

Mr T Alderman

Headteacher