

24th February 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

I am sure you are as delighted as we are that your son/daughter is now set to return to school following the Prime Minister's announcement earlier in the week. It is now clear that we are unable to commence lateral flow testing prior to 8th March 2021. Therefore, I will write to you to you before the weekend to share exact details of the process and timeline for moving from live online lessons to students returning to their classrooms.

In the Government announcement we have two key changes that I would like to bring to your attention:

1. It is now a requirement for all staff and students **to wear face covering inside classrooms** in addition to in communal areas. Students will NOT be expected to wear face coverings whilst they are exercising. The guidance also states, "Face visors or shields **should not** be worn as an alternative to face coverings". *Exemptions from the wearing of face covering still remains for individuals that have a physical impairment or disability, illness or mental health difficulties. Please can you email royds.office@sharemat.co.uk to make us aware if this exemption applies.*
2. We are now **offering asymptomatic testing or lateral flow testing** in line with Government guidelines. Testing remains voluntary, however, it is highly recommended to help keep students and staff safe.

Given the new requirements, it is imperative that parents support school by ensuring that your son/daughter has a face covering, preferably two (one to be kept safely in their school bag as a back-up for lost or forgotten face coverings). In terms of advice as to the best face covering to purchase, the cloth varieties seem to be much harder wearing and they can be washed. In addition, they have much less impact on the environment than the disposal varieties and can be purchased with filters to add further protection. **Students will be expected to arrive to school with a face covering as part of their minimum equipment requirements.**

Lateral (asymptomatic) Flow Testing

Medical evidence suggests that many individuals have Covid-19 without experiencing any symptoms. The lateral flow test is designed to identify those individuals that have the virus but are not showing the symptoms. This testing allows asymptomatic individuals to be identified so they are able to avoid spreading the virus. An individual that tests positive on a lateral flow test is required by law to follow the government's self-isolation guidance.

Whilst lateral flow testing is voluntary, we would ask you to support us by providing your consent to the testing. **The Government has indicated that we are to offer three lateral flow tests to students with parental consent, on their return to school.** The tests will be self-administered by your son/daughter, subject to your consent, and the tests will be scheduled three to five days apart. In line with Government guidance, the first test will be offered prior to students returning to the classroom. Once we have completed this round of three tests, home lateral flow testing kits will be available to students and families. This will remove the need for the tests to be taken in school. We are awaiting further information as to how and when the home test kits will be supplied.



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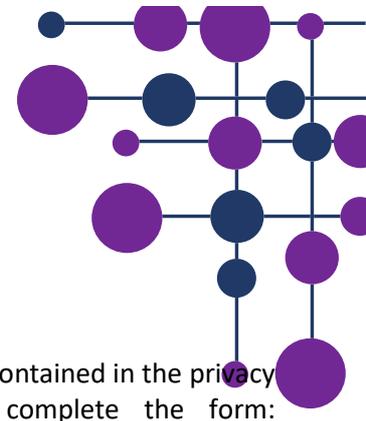


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Additional information on lateral flow testing and how your information will be secured is contained in the privacy notice. Please read the consent forms and then use the following link to complete the form:
<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/QHKNQDT>

Returning to school

We intend to operate school, in almost exactly the same way in which we did from September to December.

This will include:

- Year group staggered starts and ends to the day
- Covid safe measures which include the requirements for hand washing/use of hand sanitiser, minimised movement around school, additional cleaning during and after the school day
- Operation of bubbles
- **Face coverings will now be worn both in the classroom and communal areas.**
- Behaviour expectations remain the same and full details can be found on the policies section of the website

A reminder of the COVID timings:

	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
Arrival to school	8:20	8:40	8:35	8:30	8:25
Lessons start	8:30	8:50	8:45	8:40	8:35
Lessons end	14:45	15:05	15:00	14:55	15:55 *14:50 (if no intervention session is scheduled)

Snacks and hydration

Please could I remind all parents/carers to send their son/daughter with a bottle that can be filled with water and a snack for break times. This will avoid any hydration issues and it will ensure that your son/daughter does not become faint during the morning session. This is particularly important as we move towards warmer weather.

Year 11 Assessment / Mocks

Whilst I know this is a very stressful time for Year 11 students, and this is compounded by the continued uncertainty around how GCSE grades will be determined. I want to remind parents and Year 11 students that every member of staff is working tirelessly to make sure that your son/daughter secures the best grade they are capable of achieving. We will be sending a letter to Year 11 students and parents/carers regarding Year 11 assessments.

Finally, what has shone through during the latest national lockdown is the true nature of our students. Their positivity, hard work and resilience is excellent. They are a credit to you, our community and school. Please congratulate your son/daughter, on all their achievements.

Sending you and your families the very best of wishes

Jenny Carr
Headteacher