

## Headteacher Message (Feb 2021)

Dear Parent/Carer,

I hope this latest update finds you and yours safe and well.

I am pleased to report that the government has confirmed its school reopening plans, with all settings expected to reopen on March 8th.

Secondary schools will be given flexibility on how they manage testing in the first week back, with the expectation that returning pupils will be tested three times on site and then again once at home in the first two weeks after reopening. They will then be provided with home kits for twice weekly testing thereafter.

During the week of March 8th, pupils will only be expected to return following their first negative test result and a timetable detailing your child's test day / time and school return date can be found below:

### Return to school timetable

	<b>First test</b> <i>(pupils return home)</i>	<b>Introduction Day</b> <i>(all pupils return to school)</i>	<b>Second test</b> <i>(if negative, pupils remain in school)</i>	<b>Third test</b> <i>(if negative, pupils remain in school)</i>
<b>Year 11</b>	Friday 5 <sup>th</sup> March	Monday 8 <sup>th</sup> March	Tuesday 9 <sup>th</sup> March	Friday 12 <sup>th</sup> March
<b>Year 10</b>	Monday 8 <sup>th</sup> March	Tuesday 9 <sup>th</sup> March	Thursday 11 <sup>th</sup> march	Monday 18 <sup>th</sup> March
<b>Year 9</b>	Tuesday 9 <sup>th</sup> March	Wednesday 10 <sup>th</sup> March	Friday 12 <sup>th</sup> March	Wednesday 17 <sup>th</sup> March
<b>Year 8</b>	Wednesday 10 <sup>th</sup> March	Thursday 11 <sup>th</sup> March	Monday 15 <sup>th</sup> March	Thursday 18 <sup>th</sup> March
<b>Year 7</b>	Thursday 11 <sup>th</sup> March	Friday 12 <sup>th</sup> March	Tuesday 16 <sup>th</sup> March	Friday 19 <sup>th</sup> March

***\*If you have not provided consent for your child to be tested, they will not attend school on the first test day. Their first day back in school will be on their Introduction Day when all pupils will return to school.***

Whilst we are looking forward to welcoming back our young people, it is important we get the right balance between the importance of getting pupils back into the classroom and doing this in a way that is as safe as possible.

We appreciate that pupils will be excited about seeing their friends, and our re-connection programme allows for resocialisation and adjustment time, but the expectation is that every child leaves the school site immediately after their allocated first test appointment to assist and support the safe, effective and efficient roll out of the initial testing programme.

The need for face coverings has also been extended to secondary school classrooms and indoor spaces so we would appreciate parents supporting us with the reinforcement of that message and other social distancing measures to their child.

During the phased re-opening week, pupils will still be expected to access remote learning until they return on their allocated day to classroom based learning.



### **School Arrival and Exit**

<b>Year Group</b>	<b>Arrival Time</b>	<b>Exit Time</b>	<b>Entrance / Exit via</b>
Year 7	8:30am	3:10pm	Green Gates
Year 8	8:30am	3:20pm	Pupil Reception in St Mary's Building
Year 9	8:30am	3:20pm	Green Gates
Year 10	8:30am	3:20pm	St. Bede entrance
Year 11	8:30am	3:20pm	St. Bede entrance

### **When will your child sanitise their hands?**

Your child will be asked to sanitise their hands as they enter school, they will sanitise their hands using the antibacterial gel provided. Pupils will also be asked to sanitise their hands before they enter the lunch hall. Pupils will be reminded throughout the day of the importance of hygiene and washing their hands. We have visual aids around the school building to remind pupils of the importance of this.

### **Will your child need to wear a face covering?**

In line with the government guidance, pupils will be expected to wear a face covering in all areas inside the school building, including the classroom, unless they are medically exempt. This does not apply in situations where wearing a face covering would impact on the ability to take part in exercise or strenuous activity, for example in PE lessons. Face coverings do not need to be worn by pupils when outdoors on the premises.

### **Does your child need to wear their normal school uniform?**

Yes, your child should wear their normal uniform. This includes the day they are first tested. Our uniform is the strongest visual representation we have of our standards.

#### **Girls' Uniform:**

- Knee-length skirt - never rolled up
- School cardigan/ jumper - never tucked in
- Collar on the outside of the blazer
- White shirt - tucked in all the way around
- School blazer
- Black tights
- Black shoes - no designer shoes/ no bows/ no boots/ no heels
- No jewellery/ nail paints/ false nails/ excessive makeup
- Hair must be no shorter than a number 2 blade and there should be no patterns, lines or symbols shaved into the hair. No non-natural hair colours are allowed for any pupil.

#### **Boys' Uniform:**

- School blazer
- School tie - not damaged
- White shirt, tucked in all the way around
- Belt - plain belt/ no designer belts
- School trousers - no skinny trousers
- Plain black shoes - no Velcro shoes/ no boots



- Hair must be no shorter than a number 2 blade and there should be no patterns, lines or symbols shaved into the hair. No non-natural hair colours are allowed for any pupil.

### **What equipment does your child need to bring into school?**

- Pencil Case: two black or blue pens; green pen; ruler; rubber and highlighter.
- School Planner
- Reading book, which is age appropriate

### **Why does my child need a reading book?**

A key focus in school is to promote academic reading and reading for pleasure. It is essential that **all** pupils have a reading book with them as part of their essential equipment. As we are aware of the evidence linking reading with improving mental health, life expectancy, future job prospects and academic qualifications, pupils will have regular reading sessions throughout the school week. It has been proven that regular reading will improve progress in ALL subjects, and not just English.

Evidence suggests that children who read for enjoyment every day not only perform better in reading tests than those who do not, but also develop a broader vocabulary, increased general knowledge and a better understanding of other cultures. In fact, reading for pleasure is more likely to determine whether a child does well at school than their social or economic background.

Lacking vital literacy skills holds a person back at every stage of their life. As a child they won't be able to succeed at school, as a young adult they will be locked out of the job market, and as a parent they will not be able to support their own child's learning. This intergenerational cycle makes social mobility and a fairer society more difficult.

Please ensure your child has a reading book with them every day. Try to talk to them about the book they are currently reading and encourage them to read at home. If you need advice on how to encourage your child to read or you would like book recommendations, please see our regular newsletter *Reading Matters*, which is available on our school website.

### **What will happen on the first day my child is tested?**

Parents and carers will receive an email with the time of their child's appointment the day prior to their first test. The child must arrive at school, in full uniform, at the time designated on the text message. Pupils should not arrive early or late for their appointment and must maintain social distancing at all times. It is important that your child does not eat or drink 30 minutes before they have their test as this will affect the result and void the test. Once your child arrives on site they will enter through the green gates outside of St John Paul II building. They will be escorted to the sports hall where their first LFD test will take place. Once the test is complete the child will return home. Pupils will work remotely on Teams for the remainder of the day.

### **What will happen on their 'Introduction Day'?**

If your child's LFD test result is negative they will return to school the following day. As a school, we believe it is vital to support our pupils not only academically, but also holistically. Therefore, on the first day the pupils fully return to school we will adapt our normal curriculum and offer an 'Introduction Day'. This day will offer a range of activities and sessions which will support the wellbeing of pupils and provide a social, spiritual and emotional bridge between lockdown and re-engaging with peers and the school environment.

The sessions offered throughout the day will focus on responding to feedback from pupils in the Mental Health and Wellbeing Survey. The sessions include:

- sleep, exercise and diet
- stress, anxiety and resilience
- team building and confidence

Following the Introduction Day, pupils will return to normal timetabled lessons.

### **If my child has a Special Educational Need will there be any extra provision made for them on their return to school?**

The SEN Department have reviewed the support timetables to ensure there is good coverage for all pupils requiring support. During the first week, some pupils will also be given additional support with any anxieties or questions using social stories, based upon returning to school and the Government road-mapping around education. If you do have any further concerns or questions, please contact the SEN department via email [senteam@olsb.bhcet.org.uk](mailto:senteam@olsb.bhcet.org.uk).

### **When will the school be cleaned?**

Enhanced cleaning schedules are in place and the school will be cleaned regularly throughout the day. Dining halls will be cleaned during and after each sitting and before the next year group enter.

### **Is attendance still important?**

Yes, attendance is **very** important.

School attendance will be mandatory for all pupils from 8th March.

The usual rules on school attendance apply, including:

- parents' duty to secure their child's regular attendance at school (where the child is a registered pupil at school and they are of compulsory school age)
- the ability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices in line with local authorities' codes of conduct

### **What should you do if your child is self-isolating?**

A small number of pupils will still be unable to attend in line with public health advice to self-isolate because they:

- have symptoms or have had a positive test result
- live with someone who has symptoms or has tested positive and are a household contact
- are a close contact of someone who has coronavirus (COVID-19)

If they are unable to attend school because they are complying with public health advice, we will be able to immediately offer your child access to remote education. We will monitor your child's engagement with remote learning via TEAMS. Where they are not able to attend school as a member of their household is following clinical and/or public health advice, the absence will not be penalised.

## **Lateral Flow Device (LFD) Tests**

### **How will the tests work?**

Pupils taking the test will be supervised by trained staff. The lateral flow device tests are quick and easy to undertake, using a swab of the nose and throat. Results, which take around half an hour from testing, will be shared with the pupil via text/email. Where pupils are under 16, parents or carers will also be informed.

This is an asymptomatic test, which means the test only works if you have no symptoms (a high temperature, a new continuous cough, a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste).

### **Can I eat or drink before the test?**

No. It is important that you do not eat or drink 30 minutes before you have your test as this will affect the result and void the test.

### **What if I have not given consent?**

If you have not provided consent for your child to be tested, they will not receive a test. Your child will go with their class to the test site but will not take part in the testing. If you want to give consent for your child, you must complete the form.

### **What if someone tests positive?**

If someone tests positive on a lateral flow device test in school, they will be informed immediately by a member of staff. We will also inform parents or carers of the result. They will then be required to isolate for 10 days.

When testing from home, if someone tests positive they will need to take a further 'PCR test' to confirm the result. The 'PCR test' should be on the same day or as soon as possible afterwards. During this time while they wait for the PCR result (via text/email) they will need to self-isolate. If the PCR test returns a positive result they will have to continue to self-isolate and follow the guidance from NHS Test and Trace.

### **What happens if the test is negative?**

A small number of pupils may need to repeat the test if the first test was invalid or void for some reason. After their first test, if a pupil is negative, they will go home and return to school the following day. When the pupils return to school after their first test, during their second and third test, pupils who test negative will be able to stay in the school and resume their lessons as normal. Parents will be informed of a negative test result via text/email.

### **What if staff or pupils have been in close contact with someone in the school who tests positive?**

The staff member or pupil will be notified that they are a close contact by Our Lady and St Bede and they will need to self-isolate as per the national guidelines.

### What if they develop symptoms?

This testing programme (lateral flow testing) is for people with no symptoms. If anyone develops symptoms at any time (such as a high temperature, a new, continuous cough or a loss or change to their sense of smell or taste) they must immediately self-isolate, and book a test by calling 119 or visiting <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>.

### Symptomatic testing

The LFD is an asymptomatic testing programme and does not replace the current testing policy for those with symptoms. Anyone with symptoms (even if they recently had a negative LFD test result), should still self-isolate immediately according to government guidelines.

### Home Testing

You will receive more information in due course regarding home testing kits which will be provided following your child's third test in school.

### NHS Test and Trace process

**Staff members, parents and carers will need to book a test if they or their child has symptoms - the main symptoms are:**

- a high temperature
- a new continuous cough
- a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste

**Staff members, parents, carers and pupils must self-isolate immediately and not come to school if:**

- they develop symptoms
- they have been in close contact with someone who tests positive for coronavirus (COVID-19)
- anyone in their household, support or childcare bubble develops symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19)
- they are required to do so having recently travelled from certain other countries
- they have been advised to isolate by NHS test and trace or the PHE local health protection team, which is a legal obligation

**Staff members, parents, carers and pupils must provide details of anyone they have been in close contact with, if they test positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) or if asked by NHS Test and Trace.**

Household members of those contacts who are sent home do not need to self-isolate themselves, unless the pupil or staff member who is self-isolating subsequently develops symptoms, or unless they have been told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace or their public health protection team, in which case they must self-isolate. If someone in a class or group that has been asked to self-isolate develops symptoms themselves within the 10 days from the day after contact with the individual who tested positive, they should follow guidance for households with a possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection.

They should get a test. If the test delivers a negative result, they must remain in isolation for the remainder of the **10-day isolation period**. This is because they could still develop coronavirus (COVID-19) within the remaining days.



If the test result is positive, they should inform their school immediately, and should isolate from the day of onset of their symptoms and at least the following 10 full days.

Their household should self-isolate starting from when the symptomatic person in their household first had symptoms and the next 10 full days, following guidance for households with a possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection.

Finally, I wanted to take this opportunity to thank parents/carers for their support and patience.

Whilst we cannot just pick up exactly where we left off and while it is important that we acknowledge the big event everyone will have experienced in terms of the lockdown – and for some, the significant loss associated with it – we want to try to ensure in the first instance that the return to school feels happy for pupils.

To that end, rest assured that enhanced pastoral support will figure heavily in any curriculum recovery model deployed at Our Lady and St. Bede Catholic Academy and I look forward to moving forward together in partnership, for the good of the children we serve.

With thanks and best wishes,

Mrs M Wilkinson  
Headteacher