

To the parents of pupils in Years 3 to 8

25th February 2021

Dear Parents

I hope that you and your families are well, and that you were able to enjoy some very well-deserved rest over the half term break.

You will know from the Prime Minister's announcements last Monday that schools will be going back from 8th March. As you can imagine, there is a lot of work going on to ensure that we will be ready to welcome our pupils and to keep them, and staff, safe. This includes, of course, updating our risk assessments so that we can be wholly confident that our protocols will mitigate the risk of infection.

With regard to the testing of pupils, there are new arrangements to be implemented but we have been administering these tests throughout the first half of term albeit on a smaller scale. All pupils in Years 7 and above are required to have had one negative test before coming back into the classroom, and all boarders, regardless of age, will continue to be tested.

With regard to day pupils in Years 7 and 8, our current thinking is that we will do the first test for each pupil on Monday 8th March (followed by further tests as set out by the government over the week). We will need to ask parents of these pupils to bring their child into school at some point during Monday 8th March according to a booking system (and take their child home again).

With regard to day pupils in Years 6 and below, they will not be tested (which is in accordance with the government guidance).

With regard to boarders currently in the UK, we ask that they arrive on Monday 8th March, and Mrs Wells will liaise with parents early next week with regard to the timing of their arrival. With regard to boarders currently outside of the UK, there is no change to the arrangements which have already been communicated to these families. Parents of all boarders are very welcome to contact Mrs Wells directly if they have any queries.

Because of these testing arrangements, remote learning (either at home or in the boarding house) will continue for all Prep School pupils until the end of Monday 8th March, and we will be able to welcome all pupils in Years 3 to 8 physically into school from the morning of Tuesday 9th March. A separate letter regarding Key Worker children on Monday 8th March will be sent to relevant parents shortly by Mrs Hall-Tomkin.

We are currently planning to run our school transport along similar lines to last Autumn term.

Families with pupils in Years 7 and 8 may be aware that we have an exeat weekend scheduled in the calendar for the weekend of 13th and 14th March. This will go ahead so there will be no school on Saturday 13th March. Boarders are of course very welcome to stay in school for the whole weekend to enjoy some rest and the fun activities which we will be providing.

For pupils in Years 6 and under who had signed up for our Saturday Morning Enrichment programme for the Spring term, we will not be running these sessions before Easter. Information and sign-up forms for the Summer term will be sent out in due course and we are very much looking forward to restarting these activities.



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Please could parents bear in mind that the arrangements above reflect our current planning but that we know from experience during this pandemic that plans sometimes need to be changed. Further information regarding the return to school for all pupils will be sent to you during the first few days of next week.

Although we are a school with high expectations with regard to appearance, we realise of course that COVID has complicated things from a uniform point of view. We do not want pupils or parents worrying about these matters at the moment; we all have enough to juggle! For the remainder of the Spring term, we ask that pupils come into school in their sports kit on days they have PE or Sport, as per the protocols we followed last term. On days they do not have sport, they will be able to wear either the Winter uniform, the Summer uniform or sports kit. If pupils have outgrown any particular item which is proving hard to replace, it will be fine to wear the closest alternative that they have. With regard to boarders and their uniform, parents are very welcome to communicate direct with Mrs Wells and I am sure that any problems will be able to be solved.

With regard to uniform in the Summer term, it is, at the current time, not clear as to whether government guidelines will allow us to fully use our changing room facilities again. It is possible therefore that the uniform arrangements for the Spring term will need to continue into the Summer term. We recommend that you do not, for the time being, purchase new Summer uniform, and we will communicate further on this issue as and when the position regarding changing becomes clearer.

A priority for us has been the monitoring of mental health and wellbeing in pupils and staff. This past year has been tough for many, and Form Tutors and our pastoral staff have been working hard with pupils throughout lockdown. We are aware that a return to school can lead to anxieties and we will be encouraging all of the pupils to voice their concerns over the next few weeks should they arise.

Thank you again for all of your support in recent weeks. The data across the country, and particularly in this part of the UK, is very encouraging, and we are hugely excited at seeing everyone back in school again.

With best wishes,
Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'A Edwards', written in a cursive style.

Andrew Edwards

