

26 February 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

I am writing to you give you details about the return of all students to school from 8 March. All students, apart from those who have received a letter from the NHS telling them to continue shielding, should attend school as normal from 8 March. If your child has received a shielding letter please contact their pastoral team to share this information with them, so that we can plan how best to support your child at this time.

Please do not send your child to school at any time if they, or anyone in your household, has COVID 19 symptoms. If your child develops symptoms whilst in school, we will contact you to ask you to collect them from school. Students who are displaying symptoms will be isolated in school until they can be collected. We will follow advice from the Public Health team in York if we have confirmed cases of COVID 19 in school, and will continue to keep you informed of any cases.

COVID19 testing arrangements

In line with Department for Education guidance we are offering asymptomatic testing for all students to cut lines of transmission of COVID19 as the first step is taken out of national lockdown. These tests will use Lateral Flow Device (LFD) tests. These tests do not need to be sent to a laboratory to be processed and provide a rapid result (within 30 minutes). These tests are voluntary. If parents/carers decide that they do not want their child to take part in testing, their child will still return to school at the same time as other students. We are, however, strongly recommending that students take part in testing as part of our system of controls.

We have sent out a separate communication asking for consent for students to take part in testing. Students who are aged over 16 can choose to give consent, rather than their parents or carers.

The deadline for giving consent to be tested in school is midday today.

All tests will be self-administered by students under the supervision of members of staff.

Testing arrangements are split into two different stages –

1. Testing in school

We have been asked to test students three times in school. These tests have to be spread out to make the process more robust from a public health perspective. Once students have taken their first test, and if it gives a negative result, they can return to school.

To minimise disruption to learning we will be carrying out the first tests for all students during the week beginning 01 March. This approach is in line with Department for Education and York Public Health advice.

HEADTEACHER: Mr David Hewitt, BA (Hons), NPQH

DEPUTY HEAD: Mr A Haigh, BSc (Hons)

DEPUTY HEAD: Ms C Mann, BA (Hons)

“Working together to achieve success”

If we have received consent for your child to be tested, we will send you an appointment time for their test. Students must come to school at the correct time they have been given and should go straight home after they have completed their test. They do not need to wear school uniform when they come to school for this test. As we are minimising the number of people in school, parents or carers will not be able to accompany their child into the school building, but can bring them to school.

The results of tests will be sent to the mobile phone and email address you have provided as part of the consent process. Students will not need to wait for their test result.

Key worker and vulnerable students, whose parents/carers have given consent for them to complete testing, will do this on the days they are already in school.

Whilst these arrangements will cause some disruption to the remote education we are providing, they do mean that all students will return to school on 08 March. If we wait until the week beginning 08 March to start testing, students will have to return in a staggered fashion over a number of days as testing is completed. This will significantly delay the return to face to face lessons for a large number of our students.

Teachers will continue to deliver live-lessons during the week beginning 01 March, but will be aware of which students will be missing from their lessons as they are in school for testing. To reduce disruption to Y11 and Y13 lessons, and preparation for assessment, we intend to schedule the initial tests for these students on our Non-Screen day on Thursday 04 March.

Tests 2 and 3 will be mostly carried out in the week beginning 08 March. At this stage we are planning to schedule these tests outside of the school day for most students. Students should return home after they have completed their test. The results of tests will be sent to the mobile phone and email address you have provided as part of the consent process. Students will not need to wait for their test result.

We are hoping to take this approach so that disruption to learning is minimised. Testing large numbers of students during a normal school day will lead to significant disruption to lessons. Given the amount of time that students have been out of school it seems sensible to try and avoid doing this. We will provide further information about the scheduling of tests 2 and 3 during the week beginning 01 March.

If it is more convenient for you, you can also book tests at the City of York public testing sites. Details of how to book these tests will be sent to you over the weekend.

If you choose to use a public testing site please inform us after your child has completed all three tests, by emailing school on the email address below. We will then send you some documentation to complete before a home test kit will be issued.

contact@josephrowntree.york.sch.uk

2. Testing at home

In line with Department for Education guidance, once students have completed three tests in school, or at the public testing sites, they will be issued with a home testing kit so that they can complete their tests at home. We cannot issue home testing kits until the three tests have been completed in school or at the public testing site, unless you have asked us to do this because of specific SEND or medical needs.

Consent for home testing is not required, but there is a legal obligation to register the result of these tests with the NHS once they have been completed. These testing kits will allow students to complete tests twice a week at home.

We do not have a timescale for how long home testing will continue, but we will keep parents and carers fully informed as we receive updates about this. We will provide further information about home testing during the week beginning 08 March.

Members of staff have been completing tests at home, and on-site, since the start of January and will continue to do this. Whilst a few colleagues have found testing to be unpleasant to start with, they have quickly become used to doing this, and it has now just become part of their weekly routine. Please look at the materials we have provided with the consent form with your child and reassure them about this process.

If a student or member of staff has a positive test result from any of these tests, they and all members of their household will have to self-isolate in line with NHS guidance.

Testing of contacts of confirmed cases of COVID19

Prior to the Christmas holiday, schools were asked to introduce Lateral Flow Testing for any students who were identified as a contact of anyone in school who tested positive for COVID19. Government guidance has changed and we are no longer being asked to do this.

Any members of staff or students who are identified as a contact will have to self-isolate at home for 10 days. This will be the case even if they are completing tests at home and continue to get a negative test result.

Face Masks

In line with the latest Government guidance, all students and members of staff will have to wear a facemask in school when they cannot maintain 2 metres of social distancing. This requirement will be in place until Friday 26 March. This will mean that students will have to wear facemasks in all corridor areas of the school, in the vast majority of lessons and form times, and when they are in the canteen areas if they are not eating. This will include in PE changing rooms. Facemasks will not need to be worn outside of the school building, but students should maintain social distancing from each other.

I do appreciate that wearing facemasks for longer periods of time may be uncomfortable, but this additional precautionary measure is for a limited period of time. This will add to the other measures school has in place. We know from our experiences since September that when we all take individual responsibility for actions such as wearing facemasks, we collectively reduce the chance of there being transmission of COVID19 in our school community. At break and lunchtimes students will be encouraged to go outside so that they can remove their facemasks and get a break from wearing them.

Given the long periods of time that students have been out of school, and the importance of minimising the chance of students having to self-isolate at home, I would expect all parents and carers to support us in ensuring that students wear facemasks when they should do in school. We know that some students are exempt from wearing facemasks and have their details in school already. If your child has a medical issue that we are not aware of, that means they will not be able to wear a facemask in school, please contact your child's pastoral team so that we are aware of this issue.

Members of staff will not wear facemasks whilst they are in the teaching boxes at the front of their classroom, as they are 2 metres away from all students. This will also make it easier for students to hear and understand instructions.

Face masks that are worn in school should be suitable for a school environment; smart and without motifs and logos. We reserve the right to ask a student to change into a disposable face mask if we feel their face mask is not suitable for school. Students should bring a sealable plastic bag to place their facemask in when they are not wearing it.

Health and Safety

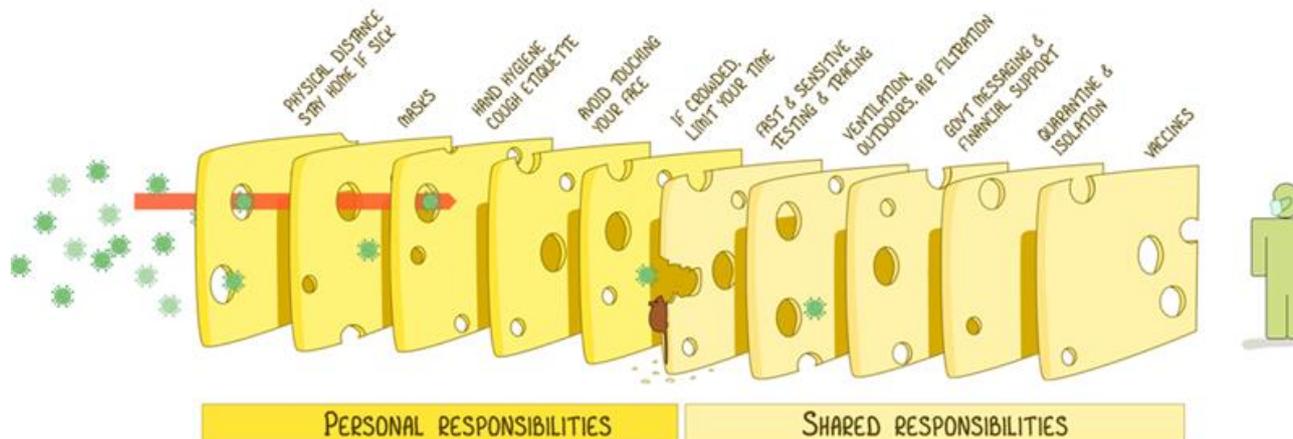
We are continuing with the work we have been doing since September on reducing risk of transmission and have completed a lot of work to make sure the school site is as risk free as possible. It is impossible to eliminate all risks entirely, but all students and members of staff will continue to follow strict hygiene procedures and there will be much more regular cleaning throughout the school day.

Students will continue to clean their hands when they arrive at school, before and after eating, and after using the toilet. We have some antibacterial gel in school, but we recommend that students bring their own small bottle of gel to use at appropriate times during the school day.

The diagram below is a helpful illustration of how a combination of individual actions and wider actions in society combine to reduce the threat of COVID19 to us all.

THE SWISS CHEESE RESPIRATORY VIRUS PANDEMIC DEFENCE

RECOGNISING THAT NO SINGLE INTERVENTION IS PERFECT AT PREVENTING SPREAD



EACH INTERVENTION (LAYER) HAS IMPERFECTIONS (HOLES).
MULTIPLE LAYERS IMPROVE SUCCESS.

SWISS CHEESE
VIRUS PANDEMIC DEFENCE
WITH THANKS TO JODY LAVARD, KATHERINE AEDON & THE LINE OF
BASED ON THE SWISS CHEESE MODEL OF ACCIDENT CAUSATION BY JAMES T REASON,
VERSION
UPDATE: 24OCT

Exam Grades

We have received updated information from Ofqual this week about how exam grades will be awarded this year. Once we have finalised our plans for how students will be assessed in school I will be able to confirm the key dates for the remainder of this half term and when our next training day will be. Information about our arrangements for students due to sit exams this year will be sent to the relevant parents and carers next week.

We are very much looking forward to seeing all of our students back in school. We know that after such a long period out of school students may be nervous about returning to school. In September we found that a quick return to routines of learning worked well and we will use this approach again from 08 March. Students who need additional support will be offered this by their form tutor and pastoral team. I will send some further information next week that will include reminders about routines and expectations of students.

I do hope that this information gives you the detail you need at this stage, explains why we are taking the approach we are, and reassures you that we will return all students to school speedily, whilst maintaining stringent health and safety regimes. If you require any further information please contact your child's pastoral team.

Thank you for your continued support.

Dave Hewitt
Headteacher