

25 February 2021

PENWORTHAM PRIORY ACADEMY REOPENING PLANS – MARCH 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

Welcome back from what I hope has been a restful half term break for you all.

An overview

As you know, on Monday this week, Boris Johnson confirmed that all schools in England will reopen from 8 March, with secondary schools able to decide a phased return during that week in order to undertake the mass testing of all pupils before they return to the classroom. Secondary school pupils will have to produce at least one negative Coronavirus test before being able to attend classes. Each child will in fact have three tests at school between 8 and 26 March before moving to twice-weekly home tests thereafter. The Government is also recommending the use of face masks for the rest of this term in "all indoor environments", including during lessons. Breakfast and after-school clubs can also reopen and other activities, including some non-contact sports, can restart.

As I'm sure you can appreciate, alongside all this, there is much for us to consider as we move towards welcoming back our pupils into school. Mass testing alone represents a huge logistical challenge for schools.

So, with all this in mind, I have chosen to write to you now in order to share with you, as soon as possible, our plans to undertake this mass testing as well as covering some of the practicalities associated with our pupils return. Please be assured, our plans focus on ensuring the safe return of all our pupils to school.

As always, we appreciate your spirit of understanding with all of this.

Mass testing

We are being asked to test all our pupils three times at school over the coming weeks. The first test must return a negative result before pupils will be able to come back into school, so in order to carry out this initial mass testing, we will operate a phased return for year groups over the first week to assist with this.

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Following this initial test, two further tests will be carried out over the course of the next two weeks, with pupils coming down to our testing centre, year group by year group, class by class.

After this initial programme of three tests in school, pupils will be provided with two rapid tests to use each week at home. Further information on this will follow in due course.

Please note, any pupil who has tested positive for Coronavirus in the past must wait 90 days after getting their positive test before they can be tested again. Please do not send your pupil into school for testing if they fall within this 90-day window as they are likely to return a positive result again, at which point we would have no choice but to ask them to self-isolate once again.

Phased reopening plans for our pupils – an overview

Each year group will be allocated a specific day to come into school, be tested and then return home. The emphasis in the first week is on testing, not getting all pupils back in the classroom on Monday, 8 March. On the day allocated to each year group to come into school for testing, there will be no remote learning for that year group. Instead, the focus will be on coming into school for testing (they do not need to be in uniform for this). Pupils can use the remainder of the day to take part in other wellbeing activities of their choice.

Each day, our testing centre will be open between the hours of 9.00am and 3.00pm.

Our testing centre is in the dining room so can be easily accessed directly from the school car park.

An instructional video will be made available next week for pupils and parents to watch, outlining what to do when they come into school for their initial test.

Following testing, parents will only be contacted later that day should your son or daughter return a positive result, as this will mean they are not able to attend school until they have undergone the 10-day period of isolation at home.

We will not contact parents if the result for your son or daughter is negative.

Whilst testing remains voluntary, we are all strongly advised to take part in the testing for the benefit of all and I would urge all parents to complete the consent form and ensure your daughters and sons participate in the testing regime. Pupils who don't consent to testing should return to school at the same time as their peers.

Any pupil who arrives at school for testing but has not completed the online consent form will not be allowed to take a test.

If you are yet to complete your online testing consent form, please do so by visiting the following link:
<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=id9BE8UjUUqLD9VLKIqMFp7MGKsaqzNDIcHS%20poNbUvdUQUc40EtPS0IWWFFKM0Q2RkFRSDdKR0hZRi4u>

To understand how your child's personal data is to be used in the event of both positive and negative tests and the rights that individuals have, please refer to the DfE or to our existing Privacy Notice and some FAQs regarding testing on the school's website. www.priory.lancs.sch.uk/about-priory/policies

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Phased reopening plans for each specific year group

FRIDAY, 5 MARCH

Year 11 will come into school to get tested throughout the day. Simply arrive, test and leave. Only those who return a positive result will be contacted later in the day. There will be no remote learning for Year 11 on this day.

MONDAY, 8 MARCH

All **Year 11** pupils who have not been contacted informing them of a positive result, will return to school as normal and continue with their lessons in school. All previous arrangements that were in place prior to this last lockdown will continue (year group bubbles, dining areas etc).

Year 10 will come into school to get tested throughout the day. Simply arrive, test and leave. Only those who return a positive result will be contacted later in the day. There will be no remote learning for Year 10 on this day.

TUESDAY, 9 MARCH

All **Year 11** will continue with their lessons in school as normal.

All **Year 10** who have not been contacted informing them of a positive result, will return to school as normal and continue with their lessons in school. All previous arrangements that were in place prior to this last lockdown will continue (year group bubbles, dining areas etc).

Year 9 will come into school to get tested throughout the day. Simply arrive, test and leave. Only those who return a positive result will be contacted later in the day. There will be no remote learning for Year 9 on this day.

WEDNESDAY, 10 MARCH

All **Year 11** and **Year 10** will continue with their lessons in school as normal.

All **Year 9** who have not been contacted informing them of a positive result, will return to school as normal and continue with their lessons in school. All previous arrangements that were in place prior to this last lockdown will continue (year group bubbles, dining areas etc).

Year 8 will come into school to get tested throughout the day. Simply arrive, test and leave. Only those who return a positive result will be contacted later in the day. There will be no remote learning for Year 8 on this day.

THURSDAY, 11 MARCH

All **Year 11**, **Year 10** and **Year 9** will continue with their lessons in school as normal.

All **Year 8** who have not been contacted informing them of a positive result, will return to school as normal and continue with their lessons in school. All previous arrangements that were in place prior to this last lockdown will continue (year group bubbles, dining areas etc).

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Year 7 will come into school to get tested throughout the day. Simply arrive, test and leave. Only those who return a positive result will be contacted later in the day. There will be no remote learning for Year 7 on this day.

FRIDAY, 12 MARCH

All year groups - All pupils will be back in school and will continue with their lessons as normal.

Learning from home - 'Live Learning' @ Priory - all pupils – all year groups

From w/c 8 March, pupils in Years 7 – 10 must continue to follow their ordinary timetable on the days they remain at home (with the exception of their testing day). Staff will continue to teach their lessons, take their registers as normal and be contactable through Microsoft Teams. However, please understand that staff will now be physically teaching in school as well and therefore moving round the building from lesson to lesson. For this reason, the lessons are likely to take the form of more 'drop-in sessions', where staff and pupils will prepare for their return to school. Regardless, pupils are expected to be ready to engage in their learning for each lesson as normal but will have to wait longer to be invited into each lesson by their teacher as staff move from lesson to lesson in school.

System of controls

Please understand that our return to on-site provision for all will be supported by continuing with our extensive range of actions designed to minimise the spread of Coronavirus (COVID-19). We all worked hard to implement and follow these measures prior to this lockdown and continuing with our existing arrangements will be vital when pupils return. By continuing to follow our system of controls, we will effectively reduce the risks in school and each of us help to create an inherently safer environment.

Face coverings

The only significant difference to our existing Covid systems is the additional requirement that face coverings must now be worn in classrooms as well. 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. This will be reviewed again by the government at Easter. It is essential therefore that all pupils not only continue to bring their own face coverings into school, but they wear them as they have been doing and additionally wear them in lessons. Again, this will help each of us play our part in contributing to create an inherently safer environment for not only those in our school community, but our friends and family when pupils and staff return home at the end of each day.

Attendance

School attendance will once again be mandatory for all pupils. The usual rules on school attendance apply. Pupils who have been confirmed as clinically extremely vulnerable should shield and stay at home as much as possible until further notice. They are advised not to attend school while shielding advice applies nationally.

Visits and trips

The government advises against all educational visits at this time.

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After-school activities

From 8 March, we may resume any before or after-school educational activities for our pupils. We will however have to maintain year group and/or class bubbles so such activities cannot be as extensive as they were prior to Covid. As and when certain clubs, practices and intervention sessions do recommence, pupils will be made aware of these at the appropriate time.

Assessment and exams

We believe further details on GCSEs will be provided shortly by the government and OFQUAL. As we learn more ourselves, we will share this with our Year 11 pupils and parents alike.

School buses

School buses will be operational again from Monday, 8 March but only for the pupils returning to school each day. **Pupils coming to school just for their Covid test will not be able to use the school buses.** Instead, they will need to make their own way to and from school on their testing day and we ask that parents and carers make the necessary arrangements to allow them to do this in the lead up to their test day. The buses will obviously be quiet on Day 1, transporting only Year 11 pupils, but will fill up as more year groups return during the week.

Catering

Our kitchen will be open from Monday, 8 March with a limited menu for the first week until all pupils return. Please continue to order using our on-line ordering system. Any pupils entitled to free school meals (FSM) will receive a voucher for the equivalent value of the days they continue to be at home in that first week. A communication will go out to the FSM parents next week about this.

Remote devices @ Priory

We cannot ignore the fact that, for nearly 12 months, pupils and staff have developed the use of Microsoft Teams and all it has to offer to great effect. We therefore do not intend its use or development to cease on 8 March simply because we are back in school. Far from it in fact. Instead, we will continue to use and develop our use of digital technologies and our use of MS Teams on our return. Therefore, with most pupils now having a device on which they have been engaging with the remote learning, we will allow all pupils to bring their laptops or other devices into school when we return. This will assist not only with their learning where appropriate, but with their own personal access to, and organisation of, work.

When pupils do bring a device into school, they do so on the understanding that they will need to take care of it themselves and that the school cannot accept responsibility for any loss or damage.

When bringing a device into school, pupils will simply connect to the Priory Wi-Fi network and it will ask them for their username and password. These are the same logon details that they would use for any computer in school. Just like using a computer in school, they will access the internet via our firewall which will apply the default security settings that school operates for safe use whilst in school.

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Finally

I will not write to you again tomorrow, so let me finish by thanking all of you for the huge effort you have put in to support the remote learning for our pupils and indeed for all your hard work throughout the pandemic so far. I recognise that this has been a very challenging time for us all, yet I've remained continually impressed with, and immensely grateful for, the tremendous work undertaken by staff, pupils and parents, in ensuring our young people have continued to receive the best education and support possible.

Yours faithfully



Mr M Eastham
Headteacher