



# SEATON VALLEY FEDERATION OF SCHOOLS

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**Chair of Governors:** Susan Dungworth

**Executive Headteacher:** John Barnes

26 February 2021

Good afternoon

I hope you are well and that you have been enjoying seeing some sunshine this week? This week has certainly seen a number of announcements regarding schools and they will all have an impact on us in the Federation. With regards to the announcement around the replacements for exams, catch up funding and the potential of summer events we need to look at what has been said, put a plan together and then write to you. This means that you will get information about all these areas later on this term.

The big area of interest for all of us was the announcement on Monday that all pupils will be returning to school from Monday 8th March 2021. The aim of this letter is to give you an idea of what will happen to enable this return to occur, what the daily routine is going to be like on the return and to look at the 2 biggest areas of change which are around testing and face coverings.

I realise that there is a lot of information in this letter but I hope you are able to understand it and share the information with your children. When we have all the details sorted we will write to each pupil as well.

As I write this letter we are still working through all the details but we hope to have those sorted by Tuesday and so a full detailed plan will be shared with you then.

The government have confirmed that young people in years 7 and above must have if possible a lateral flow test before they return to school and then a subsequent test twice more before they begin the testing at home. Below is our plan for this.

## **Stage 1 - Thursday 4th and Friday 5th March.**

We have decided in order to get the pupils back into school as quickly as possible and in a safe way that all pupils who have agreed to to be tested will have their first test on the 4th or 5th March. This is laid out in the table below.

As parents we need you to fill in the google form that was shared with you on Thursday 25th February as quickly as possible so that we can send out the invites for the testing slots on the 4th and 5th March. **For parents of children in years 5 and 6 your child will not be tested.**

Once the young person has had their test then they leave the site and go home. It is our belief that by doing the first test on the 4th and 5th we can have a swift start to the return to school on the 8th. Please remember that testing is self administered by the young person and you as parents must consent to it. Invites will be sent out early next week for the testing slots. Please note if you have had any ICT equipment loaned to you that it must be brought back in when you come for the test or on Monday the 8th at the absolute latest.

If you have any questions or issues that you would like to discuss please let us know and we will arrange for your child's tutor or Student Progress Leader to give you a telephone call on the 4th or 5th March.

Date	AM	PM
<b>Thursday 4th March</b>	SSMS yr 7 tested at SSMS WMS yr 7 tested at Elsdon Ave ACHS yr 11 tested at Elsdon Ave.	SSMS yr 7 tested at SSMS WMS yr 8 tested at Elsdon Ave. ACHS yr 13 tested at Elsdon Ave.

	If any pupil has had ICT kit loaned then they bring it in to have it cleaned etc.	If any pupil has had ICT kit loaned then they bring it in to have it cleaned etc.
<b>Friday 5th March</b>	SSMS testing for yr 8 WMS catch up testing for yr 7&8 ACHS yr 10 and half yr 9 tested at Elsdon Ave.  If any pupil has had ICT kit loaned then they bring it in to have it cleaned etc.	SSMS testing for yr 8 ACHS yr 12 and other half of yr 9 tested at Elsdon Ave  If any pupil has had ICT kit loaned then they bring it in to have it cleaned etc.

### **Stage 2 - w/c Monday 8th March**

On Monday, the young people will return to school as they did before the Christmas holidays. The system of bubbles and Covid secure precautions are still in place and will be in place at least until the Easter holidays. The Head of School for each school will write to you with a reminder of how the bubbles work, start times and other such information next week.

The testing regime will continue as laid out below. Those pupils who are being tested will come out of lessons, have their test and then return to lessons. It is our plan for all 3 tests, where possible, to have been completed by Monday 15th March, apart from any catch up tests that need to be done.

**Please note that the system of isolation will continue if your child is deemed a close contact by Public Health England following a positive case in school.**

Monday 8th <b>All pupils return to school</b>	SSMS year 7 second test. WMS year 7 second test ACHS year 11 second test	ACHS year 13 second test
Tuesday 9th	SSMS year 8 second test. WMS year 8 second test ACHS year 10 second test	ACHS year 12 second test
Wednesday 10th	ACHS year 9 second test	Catch up testing
Thursday 11th	SSMS year 7 third test WMS year 7 third test ACHS year 11 third test	ACHS year 13 third test
Friday 12th	SSMS year 8 third test. WMS year 8 third test ACHS year 10 third test	ACHS year 12 third test
Monday 15th	ACHS year 9 third test	Catch up testing

No pupil will be barred from returning to school if you do not wish your child to take part in the testing regime, but the government hopes parents will allow their children to take part.

### **Procedures when back in school.**

Although we are moving towards an ending to lockdown with the figures associated with cases, hospital admissions and death rates all falling, as well as the vaccine being rolled out, the threat of COVID is still very real and therefore all of the measures we had in place regarding preventing COVID will continue as will the track and trace elements etc. I ask that you speak to your children about this as we are not returning to "normal" school just yet - things are still going to be very strange and different. The new variations, especially the Kent variation, are very contagious and we must do all we can to limit the spread of the virus.

As a result in all 3 schools the students will see the following measures in place.

1. People self isolating do not come into school.
2. Face coverings (FC) are to be used in recommended circumstances. More detail on that comes later.
3. Continue to regularly wash hands.
4. Continue the “catch it, bin it, kill it” policy.
5. Continue enhanced cleaning.
6. Maintain ways of minimising contact and maintaining social distancing.
7. Keep occupied spaces well ventilated. Windows must be open.

However, there has been a change in the guidance and recommendations relating to face coverings. In the guidance sent to us by the government the following was said about face coverings.

Where pupils in year 7 (which would be children who were aged 11 on 31 August 2020) and above are educated, we recommend that face coverings should be worn by adults and pupils when moving around the premises, outside of classrooms, such as in corridors and communal areas where social distancing cannot easily be maintained.

Face coverings do not need to be worn by pupils when outdoors on the premises.

In addition, we now also recommend in those schools, that face coverings should be worn in classrooms or during activities unless social distancing can be maintained.

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.

In primary schools, we recommend that face coverings should be worn by staff and adult visitors in situations where social distancing between adults is not possible (for example, when moving around in corridors and communal areas).

Children in primary school do not need to wear a face covering.

We are taking this additional precautionary measure for a limited time during this period of high coronavirus (COVID-19) prevalence in the community. These measures will be in place until Easter. As with all measures, we will keep it under review and update guidance at that point. Transparent face coverings, which may assist communication with someone who relies on lip reading, clear sound or facial expression to communicate, can also be worn.

There is currently very limited evidence regarding the effectiveness or safety of transparent face coverings, but they may be effective in reducing the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19).

Those who rely on visual signals for communication, or communicate with or provide support to such individuals, are currently exempt from any requirement to wear face coverings in schools or in public places. Face visors or shields should not be worn as an alternative to face coverings. They may protect against droplet spread in specific circumstances but are unlikely to be effective in reducing aerosol transmission when used without an additional face covering.

They should only be used after carrying out a risk assessment for the specific situation and should always be cleaned appropriately.

Exemptions Some individuals are exempt from wearing face coverings.

This applies to those who:

- cannot put on, wear or remove a face covering because of a physical impairment or disability, illness or mental health difficulties
- speak to or provide help to someone who relies on lip reading, clear sound or facial expression to communicate

The same exemptions will apply in education and childcare settings.

As a result of this the federation is asking that the following happens with regard to face coverings and pupils.

- 1. Unless a class has been identified as being small enough for appropriate social distancing to be possible then all pupils must wear a FC all the time in lessons.**
- 2. Pupils must wear face masks indoors at break time unless they are eating or drinking. Eating a sweet or other small food item does not apply as eating.**
- 3. Face Coverings will be worn outside unless the pupils are at least 2m apart.**
- 4. In years 5 and 6 there will be no FC worn by pupils.**
- 5. If a teacher in a classroom does not want to wear a FC whilst they deliver their lesson or teach or explain, that is ok as long as they stay 2m away from pupils. If they need to go closer to a pupil then they must put a FC on. If an LSA is working close to a pupil then they must wear a FC. If a child is to answer a question then they must keep their Face Covering on.**
- 6. These measures are in place until Easter and we will have to ensure that we enforce them.**
- 7. If a parent or pupil believes they have an exemption to the Face Covering expectation they must inform the schools as to why and which section of the exemption criteria they fall into. If needs be then they must provide medical reasoning for the exemption. In the first instance please contact your Head of School or SPL to discuss this.**
- 8. If someone is not wearing a FC then they must follow strict social distancing rules and these will have to be enforced.**
- 9. A box of FC will be in each bubble for staff to acquire if a pupil needs one. Pupils will be checked at the school gates to see if they have a FC. If they do not, demerits will be issued along with a FC and if it is a regular occurrence the pupil will be sent home to get a FC.**

I totally understand and appreciate that our young people do not like wearing face coverings, no one does, and now they are being asked to wear them more than ever before. Some of them will not have had them on for most of the lockdown if they have been at home. I would love to be able to say that it's ok let's not wear them. But sadly the virus is still here and is still very easily spread. Therefore, we will be asking and expecting our young people to wear face coverings as stated above. We would greatly appreciate your help and support in this matter.

## **Testing**

I also want to be clear about what the testing regime means and is for everyone. As a federation we will set up the tests and all the admin work but the taking of tests both at school and at home are the responsibility of the pupil. The government advice with regards to testing is as follows.

Both pupils and staff in secondary schools will be supplied with LFD test kits to self swab and test themselves twice a week at home. Staff and pupils must report their result to NHS Test and Trace as soon as the test is completed either online or by telephone as per the instructions in the home test kit. Staff and pupils should also share their result, whether void, positive or negative, with their school to help with contact tracing. Pupils aged 18 and over should self-test and report the result, with assistance if needed. Adolescents aged 12 to 17 should self-test and report with adult supervision. The adult may conduct the test if necessary. Children aged 11 attending a secondary school should be tested by an adult. Staff or pupils with a positive LFD test result will need to self-isolate in line with the stay-at-home guidance. They will also need to arrange a lab-based polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test to confirm the result if the test was done at home. Those with a negative LFD test result can continue to attend school and use protective measures.

If you have any questions around testing please contact the schools and we will try and answer them as best we can.

I am aware that there are some other day to day issues that you will want to know about so I have briefly listed them here. However the heads of school will write to you with far more detail next week.

### **Attendance**

The expectations around attendance will be as normal.

### **School meals**

Will be provided as before we went into lockdown.

### **Remote education**

If pupils are isolating then work will have to be provided for them via google classroom. If pupils have had a loan of any kit then they will do the following. We will if needed re loan ICT kit out again if a pupil has to self isolate.

- KS3/4 students with loan devices to bring them back on their first test day
- KS2 students bring theirs back on their first day in school.
- If a Year 11 student received a device prior to the January lockdown via Ms Power, they will keep the device. These are the long term loans that some Year 11s have from the first lockdown scheme

### **SEND**

If your child has SEND issues then each SENCo will be getting in touch with you just to see how things are going and to answer any questions you may have. If you are uncertain of anything please contact the SENCos as soon as possible.

### **School Uniform**

I am aware from correspondence with parents that school uniforms may be an issue. However we are expecting uniforms to be worn as normal with the exception that, on days when a pupil has PE, they will wear their PE kit.

If however you have an issue with uniform please contact the school and we will see how we can support you with this issue.

### **Physical Activity**

PE will go on as normal and we hope that as soon as we can, we will run after school clubs as long as they are covid secure.

### **Behaviour discipline and well being**

We expect our pupils to follow the rules and expectations as they normally would. If you have any issues regarding your child's mental health please contact the Head of School or SPL as soon as possible and discuss these.

I realise that there is a lot of information in this letter but I felt that it was best that you were aware of what we have planned in order to get our young people back into school as quickly as possible.

I think we all will agree that having the pupils back into school is the right thing for so many reasons, but we must make sure that we do it as safely as possible.

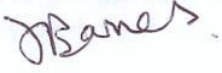
Can I please ask that you discuss the contents of this letter with your child and also fill in the google form with regard to testing as quickly as possible so that we can plan Thursday 4th and Friday 5th March.

It goes without saying that should we have to make changes to the plan we will let you know and please never forget we are doing all we can to keep your children safe when they are at school. These procedures are in place until the Easter holidays and hopefully following them we will be able to return to a more normal school?!

I have no doubt better days are coming, however they are not quite here yet, but if we can all do what is expected of us then they should be here very soon.

Best wishes for the weekend and please take care and stay safe.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Barnes". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long tail on the final letter.

John Barnes  
Executive Headteacher