

Solway Community School

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SOLWAY COMMUNITY
SCHOOL

26th February 2021

Dear Parents/Carers,

You will be aware that the Secretary of State has announced that students will return to school from Monday 8th March.

I am writing to you with, what I am sure, is eagerly anticipated information about school reopening. **Apologies for the length of this letter – there is a lot of important information you need to know. Please read to the end and make a note of important times and dates.**

We are delighted that the students are able to return; it is crucial for children to be back in school as soon as is safe to do so and the benefit of this for students' well being as well as their education are clear.

Our priority remains the health and safety of everyone at school. We already have in place robust Covid risk assessments, and we have reassessed these in light of the current DfE guidance. All staff in school are being regularly tested for Covid-19. The main change for students is that they **must now wear masks at all times in school where social distancing is not possible, including lessons** and we ask you to support your child in following that guidance by providing appropriate face coverings. Other measures remain the same, including arrival arrangements, regular hand sanitising, social distancing and ventilation in all areas. As previously, students will be in bubbles and must use the correct entrances and one way systems. Students will be outside the buildings at breaks and lunchtimes and so should bring a coat. Beacon Hill students must also wear their coloured lanyard.

School transport will be as normal from Monday March 8th and I would remind students of the rules around travelling on buses – wear a face covering, sit socially distanced and within bubbles wherever possible, hand sanitise on entering and leaving the bus and behave responsibly always.

There is an expectation that all secondary students will be tested for Covid 19 on their return, and twice more over the following week and a half, and to accommodate this, secondary schools are encouraged to adopt a phased return. We are aware of the need to manage the return to school in a calm and measured way and this will therefore happen over 8th and 9th March. When students arrive at school, they will be tested first and, assuming a negative test, return to form groups for a welcome back, equipment check, and assembly to remind them of the expectations around Covid-19 protocols. They will then return to normal lessons. Should any students test positive, they will be quarantined and parents must come and collect them from school immediately. Arrangements are as follows:

Solway

Monday March 8th

- Year 11 return 1000 for testing then lessons

- Year 10 return 1250 for testing then lessons

Tuesday March 9th

- Year 7 return 0840 for testing then lessons. Students who are 11 will need to be accompanied by a parent or other adult
- Year 8 return 1015 for testing then lessons
- Year 9 return 1250 for testing then lessons

All Solway students should arrive at the Sports Hall, socially distanced, where staff will direct them for testing.

Later start times for students on 8th March are to allow for staff Covid testing and briefings.

If you have previously given permission for your child to be tested, this still stands and you do not need to repeat it. If you would like to talk to us about this please call the school office. If you have previously NOT given permission for your child to be tested, school will contact you to discuss this.

For Year 7 students who are 11 on 8th March, a parent or other authorised adult must accompany them for each test. School will also contact you if this applies to make arrangements.

If your child accesses Hub provision, this will continue as normal on 8th and 9th March and the school office will be in touch to explain arrangements.

Distance learning will continue to be provided for all students until their return to school time, when normal timetables will be resumed. After that, distance learning will be provided if students are required to isolate. Normal attendance is expected for all students from the above times and normal attendance and absence procedures will apply.

Following the initial tests on 8th and 9th March, we will be testing all students twice more over subsequent days. We will let you know the dates in advance. On these dates, all students will arrive at the normal start time of 8.40am and lessons will be disrupted as little as possible. After this, students will be given home testing kits (these will arrive at school in the first instance – no need for you to order them) and they will be expected to self-test (with your help) twice a week and register results on the DfE website.

I realise there is a lot of information to take in. To help with this, Mrs Thorp and Mr Young will be posting videos on Facebook to remind students about what is happening on the 8th and 9th, and how to behave in school to stay Covid safe.

We recognise that some students may find the return to school concerning but please be aware school is as safe as it possibly can be and the balance of risks around attending school or staying at home is in favour of students returning to school and to their education. We are very much looking forward to seeing our students and teaching face to face and resuming 'normal' school. To that end, please make sure your child wears correct school uniform, and if they wish to bring a phone to school remember this must be handed in at the beginning of the day as usual.

Students will resume their normal timetables as soon as they have tested negative on the 8th and 9th, and should make sure they have everything they need, **including PE kit**. Please assume everything will run as per the timetable.

Once school is back up and running, I will be in touch with information about the curriculum, and how we will be supporting your child to enjoy being back at school and learning effectively.

Please remember, do not send your child to school if they are displaying any symptoms of coronavirus. If you or your child has symptoms, book a PCR test and isolate immediately. Students will be expected to remain in their bubbles in school and it remains the case that outside school they must stay at home and not mix with other students. Please make sure your child is behaving responsibly in the community so we can keep schools open and everybody safe.

If you have any questions please contact school and we will as always do our best to help. We are looking forward to seeing the students back in school very soon.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J. Schafer". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a thin horizontal line.

Judith Schafer
Executive Headteacher