

1 March 2021

Dear Parent/Carer,

As we see an improving national, regional and local picture in the current period of lockdown, we wanted to update you on our plans for the wider return of students to school.

As you will already be aware, it has been announced that students will return to school **from** March 8th. However, the return to school is considerably more complex on this occasion due to the need for schools to test all students with consent on their return to school, and then on two further occasions, before home testing commences.

The testing of students is part of the measures put into place to keep the school as safe an environment as possible for all students and staff. Testing is voluntary but encouraged. As a school community if we can identify and isolate asymptomatic cases we reduce the risk to others and minimise any further disruption to learning by keeping our students and staff in school as much as possible. In doing this we also help slow the spread of Coronavirus and relieve potential pressure on the NHS. For students to participate in the testing programme we **must** have received a completed consent form. We have sent a text message and link if we have not already received consent. You can also find more information about the testing programme and the consent form in the *Key Information and Updates* section of our website. If you wish your child to participate in the testing programme we do need to receive your consent form as soon as possible and **at the latest by Wednesday March 3rd**. Students aged 16 or over only can consent themselves using the online form or, only if absolutely necessary, on their test day as having consent well in advance is vital to support our planning.

Due to the requirement for us to conduct testing on return, in addition to the number of students that are likely to require testing and the need to safely manage any positive test results, we will need to carefully phase the return of students back into school. We will be prioritising the return of our examination classes, alongside our existing cohort of vulnerable and key worker children (who will continue coming into school during the phased return of all students).

The programme for the wider return to school will be as follows:

Year 12 & 13 – only students with consent for testing come in on **Friday 5th March for testing only**. Surnames arrive at following times: A-E at 9am, F-J at 10am, K-O at 11am, P-T at 1pm and U-Z at 2pm. Students will return home as soon as possible after testing. **Lessons for all Year 12 & 13 students commence on Monday 8th March** with a normal school day.

Year 11 – only students with consent for testing come in on **Monday 8th March for testing only (in school uniform)**. Surnames arrive at following times: A-B at 9am, C-G at 10am, H-L at 11am, M-Q at 1pm and R-Z at 2pm. Students will return home as soon as possible after testing. **Lessons for all Year 11 students commence on Tuesday 9th March** with a normal school day.

Year 10 – only students with consent for testing come in on **Tuesday 9th March for testing only (in school uniform)**. Surnames arrive at following times: A-B at 8.30am, C-G at 9.10am, H-L at 9.50am, M-Q at 10.40am and R-Z at 11.20am. Students will return home as soon as possible after testing. **Lessons for all Year 10 students commence on Wednesday 10th March** with a normal school day.

Year 9 – only students with consent for testing come in on **Thursday 11th March for testing only (in school uniform)**. Surnames arrive at following times: A-B at 8.30am, C-G at 9.10am, H-L at 9.50am, M-Q at 10.40am and R-Z at 11.20am. Students will return home as soon as possible after testing. **Lessons for all Year 9 students commence on Friday 12th March** with a normal school day.

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Year 8 – only students with consent for testing come in on **Friday 12th March for testing only (in school uniform)**. Surnames arrive at following times: A-B at 8.30am, C-G at 9.10am, H-M at 9.50am, N-R at 10.40am and S-Z at 11.20am. Students will return as soon as possible after testing. **Lessons for all Year 8 students commence on Monday 15th March** with a normal school day.

Year 7 – only students with consent for testing come in on **Wednesday 10th March for testing only (in school uniform)**. Surnames arrive at following times: A-B at 8.30am, C-G at 9.10am, H-L at 9.50am, M-Q at 10.40am and R-Z at 11.20am. Students will return home after as soon as possible after testing. **Lessons for all Year 7 students commence on Thursday 11th March** with a normal school day.

On their testing day only students that have consent for testing must come into school at their allocated time. Students without consent for testing must not come into school. Students must enter through the South Drive gates and proceed along the outside drive to the Sports Hall.

We will be aiming to give students that have consented to testing 2 further tests between 3 and 5 days apart, or as soon as practically possible, after their first test. We will inform students directly in school when their allocated second or third test slots are.

Our remote learning programme will continue for students until they return to lessons in school, and also for students that may need to self-isolate as a result of a positive test or being a close contact. We have a dedicated *Remote Learning* page on our school website for our remote learning provision. Please continue to check this page regularly for the latest information and updates. The *Key Information and Updates* page on our school website is also continuously updated, so please check back there regularly for the latest information. Both of these pages are easily accessible from the school website home page.

We have updated our Covid-19 protocol and information on the use of face coverings in school on the school website to reflect the updated guidance from the DfE. Please note that face coverings must be worn by all students, unless an exemption has been registered, at all times inside the building, including in the classroom. Face coverings can, of course, be removed when seated and eating in the dining venues during break and lunch. Any exemption from wearing a face covering needs to be registered in advance through the appropriate year group link on the school website in the *Key Updates and Information* page. If you have already registered an exemption for your child you do not need to do this again. The response of the school community to the use of face coverings has been extremely positive. As a school community we expect our students will continue to embrace any way to reduce the risk and help to protect fellow students and staff, including those that may be vulnerable. Face coverings, alongside all of our other existing measures that will continue to remain in place when students return, will reduce the risk of potential transmission of the Covid-19 virus in school.

In terms of the awarding of grades for Year 13 and Year 11 you can access further information through this link <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/how-qualifications-will-be-awarded-in-2021> and also at the following link 'How GCSEs, AS and A levels will be awarded in summer 2021' <https://www.jesmondparkacademy.org.uk/media.ashx?id=3337>. We appreciate this does not answer all of the questions that we are sure many of you have. As with all of these things the devil is in the detail regarding what schools can use as evidence so we still await the Awarding Body and Regulatory guidance. Our advice remains unchanged, students will be doing some form of assessment in every subject on their return and this will probably be ongoing until May half term. They need to be working hard so we have all the evidence we need when it comes to submitting grades.

This week is National Careers Week (1/3/21-5/3/21), a fantastic opportunity for our students to think about their next steps and explore future career ideas. As part of this, we would like to encourage you to browse the Virtual Careers Fair available on <https://ncw2021.co.uk> as well as the information available on our website at <https://www.jesmondparkacademy.org.uk/curriculum/careers>

We are all looking forward to a carefully managed return to normality over the coming weeks. The staff are extremely keen to welcome our students back into school so that they can, once again, feel the benefit of the in school learning experience and the social aspect of spending time with friends that we know so many of our young people are currently missing out on and value so much.

Many thanks for the ongoing kind messages of support for the staff, which are always greatly appreciated. Please rest assured that we want to manage the return to school as safely as possible and minimise the risks to staff and students as much as possible along the way. As a result of this, the return to school has been carefully planned and phased over a period of time. We will continue to keep the safety of everyone in our school community at the very centre of our approach.

Yours faithfully

Paul Anderson/Claire Smith
Acting Principals