

Sent: 24 February 2021 14:09

Subject: On behalf of Mrs Purnell: Return to School Update

Dear Parents/Carers,

I write to you today with some key updates and information regarding the following:

- **the reopening of Ilkley Grammar School from 8th March 2021 and phased return of students**
- **the Lateral Flow Device (LFD) testing schedule**
- **Catering arrangements in the week of the 8th March**
- **information about the LFD testing process**
- **a request to complete the testing consent form by Monday 1st March**
- **a request for volunteers to assist with coronavirus testing in the period from Monday 8th to Friday 19th March 2021**

As you will be aware, the Prime Minister has now confirmed that all schools will re-open for students from Monday 8th March 2021. Whilst all primary school students will return for face-to-face teaching on Monday 8th, secondary schools have been given the discretion to phase the return of their students throughout the week in order to facilitate coronavirus mass testing, including administering one test per student before they return.

Yesterday, we have spent some time working through the new operational guidance which has been issued to schools so that we can ensure the safe return of students and staff. All of the measures which were previously in place remain the same, but there are a number of additional control measures which have been introduced by the government:

- **Three asymptomatic voluntary tests in school from Monday 8 March –Friday 19th March:**
Testing will commence as per the schedule detailed below from Monday 8 March. Students will return to face-to-face education the **day after their first negative test result.**
- **Home testing for all students from Monday 22 March:**
Following three onsite tests, students will move to a home testing model. Students will be provided with 2 tests a week to use at home following their third test. We await the delivery of these testing kits to school.
Parents must report their child's 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. Their result, whether void, positive or negative, should also be shared with school to help with contact tracing.
NB: Home testing will require separate consent which will be sent out in due course.
- **Staff testing:**
Staff will also be provided with two home testing kits each week. Staff will also be required to report their result with NHS Test and Trace and with school.
- **Face coverings in lessons:**
Until Easter, face coverings must also be worn by staff and students in lessons where social distancing cannot 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. We are hoping that this additional requirement will be a short-term temporary measure and the government have committed to reviewing this for the summer term.

In addition to these new controls, we will continue to implement the range of measures we have had in place since the start of the academic year including staggered start, break, lunch and finish times, different entrances and exits, as well as zoning for years 7-11 to minimise student movement.

Phased Return of Students:

Whilst we would ideally like to welcome all students back immediately, the requirements for testing and the size of our student population means that we will need to phase the return of students to school throughout the week of the 8th March. Having established testing on site over the last half-term, we are now working hard to develop our testing capacity so we can rapidly scale up our operation in order to be able to offer and deliver almost 6000 tests (3 per student) over a two-week period in line with government expectations.

Our planning below is based on being able to deliver up to 700 tests per day and takes into account government guidance which states that students in years 13-10 should be prioritised to return first. Our intention is to phase the return as follows, with students returning the day after they have had their first negative result:

	Test – attend school only for coronavirus test and return home to continue remote learning	Return – attend <u>all</u> lessons in school from this date
Monday 8 th March 2021	Years 11, 13 and year 7 I and G bands	
Tuesday 9 th March 2021	Years 10 and 12 and year 7 S band	Years 11, 13 and year 7 I and G bands
Wednesday 10 th March 2021	Years 8 and 9	Years 10, 12 and year 7 S band
Thursday 11 th March 2021	Test 2 – TBC	Years 8 and 9
Friday 12 th March 2021	Test 2 – TBC	All students in school
Week commencing 15 th March	Tests 2 and 3 take place – TBC	

For the first test, students will be sent an individual appointment time to their school email address in line with the dates above. On the day of their first test, students will only be required to attend school in time for their appointment and will spend the rest of the day continuing with remote learning at home. Please note, on the day of testing there will be no live lessons delivered for the year group/year 7 band that day and staff will set key consolidation, revision, extension and enrichment tasks as appropriate for students to work through independently, at their own pace. If students receive a negative test result for their first test, they will be able to return to school the following day and will attend all lessons from that date.

For the second and third tests students will come out of their lessons at a designated time, attend the test centre, and will return to class afterwards.

NB: Where families and students have chosen not to take part in testing, they will attend school in line with the phased return above.

Catering Service

The catering service in school will not be available until all students return on Thursday 11th March. Students returning to school on Tuesday 9th and Wednesday 10th March will need to bring a packed lunch from home for these two days.

The Lateral Flow Device (LFD) Testing Required Consent:

As you are probably aware, the purpose of testing in schools is to identify **asymptomatic cases**, given that it is estimated that up to one third of people who have coronavirus do not show symptoms. By testing, we will therefore prevent further transmission of coronavirus through asymptomatic transmission within school. Whilst testing is not a condition of allowing students to return to school, it is strongly encouraged.

Below you will find further information and Frequently Asked Questions about the LFD testing process. Once you have read these and asked any further questions you may have, please complete this [consent form](#) which asks you formally if you would like your child to take part in the testing at IGS. The terms of consent are on page 2 of the consent form and attached is a copy of our privacy notice relating to testing in schools. Even if you would not like your child to take part, please complete pages 1 and 2 of the consent form to indicate you have received this communication. Please complete one form for each child. In order to help us plan and make appointments, the form should be completed as soon as possible, but no later than **Monday 1st March at 9am**.

Please note, we will need consent for the testing to take place with your child and will not conduct any testing without it. Please also be aware that if on the day of testing a student does not wish to take part, then they will not be made to do so and consent can be withdrawn at any time ahead of, or during the test.

How the Lateral Flow Device tests work

- The lateral flow tests are quick and easy to undertake, using a swab of the nose and throat (see further information of what the test involves [here](#) as well as in the attached 'Take a swab sample poster').
- Those taking the test will swab themselves under the supervision of trained IGS staff or trained volunteers.
- N.B. Any assistance given will ONLY take the form of verbal encouragement and advice and will NOT involve any physical assistance with swabbing.
- Results (which take around half an hour from testing) will be shared directly with the individual participant if positive or void.
- Parents or legal guardians will also be informed by the school if the test result is positive.
- The student (or parent depending on age) will also receive a text and/or email notification of a positive or negative result from the online NHS system, as each test is recorded by the school directly into the NHS system.

Any Questions?

Please see below for a selection of FAQs that may answer any questions you have about the process. Additional FAQs about testing and data protection are also attached. If you wish to ask a question not covered in the FAQs, including anything specific to IGS, please ask [here](#) and we will respond as soon as possible.

Request for Volunteers

Clearly, there are logistical challenges involved in scaling up our testing site so that we are able to carry out and process up to 700 tests a day. This will be particularly demanding when students have returned after their first test and the school is in full operation. In order to be able to do this, we are requesting support from our parent body and local community with a request for volunteers to support the mass testing programme which will take place on weekdays between Monday 8th March and Friday 19th March.

There are 3 roles which we are seeking to fill with volunteers who will complement the team of staff delivering testing in school:

➤ **Queue Managers who will meet and greet students**

This role requires confidence in dealing with students and a friendly, reassuring, calm and firm approach. It involves liaising with the Registration Assistant who is a member of school staff and members of the pastoral team to manage the flow of students, maintaining social distancing.

➤ **Test Assistants**

Test Assistants provide verbal advice, guidance and encouragement to students on self-swabbing using a prepared crib sheet. They provide verbal reassurance and ensure that each student quickly wipes down the area after its use. Manual assistance to students is not provided.

➤ **Test Processors**

Test Processors prepare the test sample for analysis and interpret the results. Scientific/medical/laboratory experience is an advantage but it is not essential.

If you are willing to get involved, undertake some online training and can be available for multiple morning and/or afternoon slots over the two-week period from the 8th March, then please complete this form [HERE](#) by 3pm on Friday 26th February.

We are very much looking forward to the return of students and resuming some sense of normality to our lives.

We thank you for your continued support.

Best Wishes,
Carly Purnell
Headteacher

FAQs

What if my child tests positive?

If a student tests positive on a lateral flow device, they, and you, will be informed by school and will need to self-isolate at home in line with [government guidance](#), and contact tracing will need to be undertaken. Please note, contrary to previous guidance, NHS Test and Trace and Public Health England no longer require a confirmatory PCR test following a positive result with a lateral flow test in secondary schools and colleges.

What happens if the test is negative?

While a small number of pupils may need to repeat the test if the first test was invalid or void for some reason, students who test negative on the first test will be able to return to school the following day. If students' test results are negative for their subsequent tests, they can stay in school and resume their activities as normal. Pupils will be informed of negative test results via text/email. Where participants are under 16, parents or legal guardians will be informed via the NHS system.

What if staff or students have been in close contact with someone in school who tests positive?

The staff member or student will be notified that they are a close contact by the school and will need to self-isolate for 10 days.

What is the likelihood of a false positive test?

Two studies reported in the BMJ report a very low false positive rate of LFD testing of less than .4% (.32% and .38%).

What is serial testing and why is this no longer available?

Serial testing is contact testing of students and staff who are identified as a close contact of a positive case. The government's original intention was that those identified as a close contact of someone who tested positive could be provided with daily testing for seven days and if they tested negative on a daily basis, they could continue to attend school without having to self-isolate.

However, the rollout of daily contact testing in school is now not being recommended by the government due to the emergence of the new variants of the virus which are more transmissible. Serial testing has therefore been paused. Please see the DFE [announcement](#) for further details.

What if my child develops symptoms?

This testing programme at IGS is for people with no symptoms. If your child develops symptoms at any time (including a high temperature; a new, continuous cough; or a loss or change to their sense of smell or taste) they must immediately self-isolate, and book a test by calling 119 or visiting <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>.

We will support our staff and students throughout, but please contact us if you have any questions. You can also contact the office by admin@ilkleygs.co.uk or use the link [here](#).