

1 March 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

The government has announced the controls being put in place to ensure that pupils can safely begin to return to school from Monday 8 March 2021. These controls are a key element in supporting the further opening of the country and eventually removing the current lockdown restrictions. We are all looking forward to our lives returning to some kind of normality over the coming months and we will encourage our pupils, families and staff to support this process.

One key element announced by the government is the introduction of twice weekly asymptomatic coronavirus testing for all Secondary aged pupils. The aim of this is to ensure pupils who test positive for Covid-19 do not spread the virus to others without realising they were infectious. This could cause another pupil, a family member or staff member to become unwell, which is something we would all want to avoid. School staff are already undertaking these tests twice a week and it is a minor inconvenience, which helps us all do our part to get back to fully open schools.

I can now confirm the following arrangements for the start of the return to full time schooling from Monday 8 March 2021:

Vulnerable pupils and the children of Key Workers who are currently attending

- Pupils currently attending during lockdown will have their first test on Thursday 4 or Friday 5 March 2021.
- All pupils who test negative will continue to attend school, including on Monday 8 and Tuesday 9 March 2021.
- The second test for these pupils will be administered on either Monday 8 or Tuesday 9 March 2021 alongside those of the rest of their year group and their testing routine will then fall in with their normal year group testing pattern.
- Assuming vulnerable pupils and children of key workers test negative after their tests on Thursday 4 and Friday 5 March 2021, they will be able to continue attending school as they have been doing for the duration of week commencing Monday 8 March 2021. This will only change if they provide a positive test result and, if this happens, we will speak to you at that point about next steps and self-isolation.

All other Secondary pupils

- All other pupils will be invited in for Test 1 at a given time on Monday 8 or Tuesday 9 March 2021.
- Once the pupil has taken their test at the allotted date and time, they will return home and continue with home learning until Wednesday 10 March 2021, at which point, normal attendance resumes for these pupils who have been tested.
- A school online cloud appointment will be available for all families to confirm the time their child should attend for Test 1. This online cloud appointment will be used to explain the testing process and answer any questions you may have.
- Pupils not accessing testing will attend from Thursday 11 March 2021, at which point these pupils will be provided with a second opportunity to be tested. This test will take place at the same time as those pupils who were tested at the start of the week take their second test.
- Pupils not being tested at all – for whatever reason this failure to take part in testing has occurred – will need to be socially distanced within the classroom and the dinner hall and we will make appropriate arrangements for this to happen.
- After pupils have taken three tests in school, which we anticipate should have happened no later than Friday 19 March 2021, pupils will then begin testing at home. Home testing will follow the timings being used in school, which means pupils will take home tests every 3-5 days (this will be dictated by the date of their previous test).

Testing Timetable for Test 1 - W/C Monday 8 March 2021

	Monday 8th	Tuesday 9th	Thursday 11th	Friday 12th
8am	7.1	8.1	7.1	8.1
8:30	7.2	8.2	7.2	8.2
9:00	7.3	8.3	7.3	8.3
9:30	7.4	8.4	7.4	8.4
10:00	7.5	8.5	7.5	8.5
10:30	7.6	8.6	7.6	8.6
11:00	9.1	9.4	9.1	9.4
11:30	9.2	9.5	9.2	9.5
12:00	9.3	9.6	9.3	9.6
12:30	11.1	10.1	11.1	10.1
13:00	11.2	10.2	11.2	10.2
13:30	11.3	10.3	11.3	10.3
14:00	11.4	10.4	11.4	10.4
14:30	11.5	10.5	11.5	10.5
15:00	11.6	10.6	11.6	10.6

The testing process

- Parents will be asked to read a privacy notice and provide consent for their child to take part in testing in school – we will provide the privacy notice via the website and the consent form will be sent as a link to a document to complete online before testing commences.
- Any pupil who has tested positive for Covid-19 in the last 90 days will not be asked to take part in the testing until the expiry of this time period. This is because a recent positive result could cause future tests to return 'false positive' result. If your child has tested positive for Covid-19 in the last 90-days, please email their positive test confirmation to info@appletonacademy.co.uk so that we can log these positive tests and remove your child from testing (even if you have already previously sent us this information).
- Each form group should arrive at school 15 minutes before the time of their test as stated in the table above.
- Forms will be split into two groups of 15 pupils and shown into the designated Registration Room where they will watch an induction and demonstration video showing them how to conduct the test.
- Pupils will be registered and given their test registration card.
- Once this is complete, pupils will be given the test kit by the supervising member of staff and escorted to the test site.
- Pupils will be allocated to a test base and supported to take their test.

- Once the pupils have completed their first test, they will be escorted back to the registration room whilst the test is processed - this takes half an hour and during this time, staff will discuss the return to schooling with them.
- Once the test is processed, pupils will be given their test registration card and escorted to the Secondary exit if negative so that they can go home and continue home learning.
- Pupils testing positive will be taken to a separate area of school and told their result. We will then contact parents to inform them and ask for their child to be collected from school and self-isolation will begin from that day.
- All test results will be uploaded to the NHS Test and Trace service.
- Pupils will conduct two further tests in school, keeping to a pattern of Monday and Thursday or Tuesday and Friday, depending on when the first test was completed.
- After the first test, pupils will return home and continue with home schooling until Wednesday 10 March 2021. The second and third tests will take place during a pupils' normal school day, as they will be attending school at this point. Pupils will be taken from their lessons to the testing site at the Academy and then return to the classroom once their test is complete (assuming they receive a negative result).

Home testing

- The government have announced that once a pupil has taken three tests in school, they will be provided with tests to complete at home from that point onwards. These tests are the same ones used in school and we will provide guidance on how to use them to support you with this.
- There has been a further announcement over the weekend that families of pupils in Secondary school will also be able to access twice weekly testing. Once we know how this will work, we will contact you again as we have not received any information about this yet.

Masks

As part of the systems of controls we have put in place to ensure school is as safe as it can be for our pupils, we have made the decision that pupils will be expected to wear masks in the classroom. There have been contradictory government statements about mask wearing in school during the last week or so, however, the operational guidance for schools written with the advice of Public Health England states that schools **must always** ensure face coverings are used in recommended circumstances. The more detailed guidance states that *face coverings should be worn in classrooms or during activities unless social distancing can be maintained.* As face coverings form part of the strengthened system of controls, and because face coverings are included in the 'must always' section of the Public Health England guidance, our assessment of risk is that this is not optional and that pupils must wear face masks when in school, including in the classroom. While we do have a very small number of pupils who are unable to wear a face mask, we are already aware of those pupils and our SEND team will discuss this with families. None of us thought we would be wearing face masks this time last year, but this is something we are now all used to. This is an extension of the measures we had in place in the autumn term and is a minor inconvenience if it prevents the closure of bubbles/mass pupil isolation, people becoming unwell or further National lockdowns.

Uniform

The return to full time schooling will see a return to pupils wearing full uniform in school. All pupils must wear uniform, including the correct shoes (unless it is a PE day when the correct PE uniform must be worn).

Thank you for your continued support with the further opening of school, I urge you to support testing as this will ensure we keep our pupils, families and community safe as we move towards the summer. I am pleased to say that, when pupils were last in school during the autumn term, we had very few bubble closures, which was due to the measures we had put in place and pupil and parent support of them. We would ask for your co-operation with the new measures we will have in place from Monday 8 March 2021. Working together in this way will ensure that pupils remain in school as much as they are able to until the summer term.



Yours faithfully

Heber Jones.

Ms H Jones
Executive Headteacher