

24th February 2021

Dear parent or carer

You will be aware from Mr Williams' update and the announcement by the government on Monday, that we will begin to open school from 8th March. We are delighted to be able to welcome all our students back to school and look forward to being able to provide face-to-face teaching and support once again.

Since September we have worked hard to minimize the spread of Covid-19 in our school population, whilst also isolating as few students as possible. It has been a difficult balance to find, but our approach appears to have paid off with a relatively small number of cases and a relatively small number of students being asked to isolate. One of the great challenges in minimizing the number of isolations is that some cases can be asymptomatic, meaning that students may be infectious and due to the lack of symptoms continue to attend school. This means that the virus can spread undetected through the school population causing the number of cases to rise quickly. Testing students on their return to school is one of the government's key strategies to reduce transmission and keep schools open. The aim is to identify asymptomatic cases quickly and isolate a small number of students early rather than having to isolate a greater number further down the line, once the virus has spread.

In the government's update on Monday they have directed schools to test all students on their return to school three times within the first two weeks (each test 3-5 days apart). The first test needs to take place before students are able to return to school, with the following two tests taking place once they have returned.

We have already been using the testing system since January, testing over 100 students and staff twice per week. The take-up rate amongst students who have been in school has been 100%. The tests are administered by the individuals themselves and, although mildly uncomfortable, they do not hurt and students have quickly become very confident and comfortable completing them. There are trained staff on hand to support and guide students in carrying out the tests.

In order for us to test students we are required to receive consent from you as parents/carers. Whilst we cannot force anyone to be tested, we very strongly encourage you to give consent for testing in order to reduce the potential for spreading of the virus. Please complete the form via the link below. We would be grateful if you could do this as soon as possible because this will really help our planning.

Information about how the test is administered can be found in the link below:

[Leaflet about testing process](#)

The consent we are seeking is to test students in school. The guidance from the government is that only the first of the three tests will take place in school, after which they will be carried out at home by students/parents – the logic being that students can be trained and supported in school in learning how to administer the tests properly before taking them home. We will provide details on home testing once we have received further guidance.

Please could you access the consent form [here](#) making sure you have read the information contained in the link at the top of the electronic form before completion.

Headteacher: Mr Gwyn Williams

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The consent form will need to be completed separately for each child. Sixth form students are allowed to complete the form themselves.

We would be extremely grateful if you could complete the consent form as soon as possible so that we can organise the testing in advance of students returning to school.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R.A. Johnson'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Mr R Johnson
Deputy Headteacher