



Thursday 25th February 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

RE: Weekly Update

With the announcements at the beginning of the week about the return to school, I thought that I should write to you a day earlier than usual to share our plans for re-opening from March 8th. We are excited to be preparing for a big step towards relative normality, while respecting that there will be a range of responses to the news, including those who may be anxious. Safety remains our number one priority and there will be a strong focus around 'keeping safe' through assemblies and form time.

Covid-19 testing

The Government has asked all secondary schools to offer asymptomatic testing to students before they return to school. Any students with Covid-19 symptoms (continuous cough, high temperature, loss of taste or smell) must not attend school and should arrange for a test at an NHS test centre.

The first test result should be received before the students return to face-to-face teaching, with the second and third tests conducted in school (3-5 days apart). From March 16th students will continue to test themselves at home twice a week.

Preparing to conduct thousands of tests over a short period of time presents significant logistical challenges and there is no perfect solution. I believe that our plans are realistic and deliverable. I recognise that these plans may present challenges for some families and ask that you contact us should you have any concerns or queries via covid@emmbrook.wokingham.sch.uk.

To help your child prepare for testing, the NHS has provided videos which show the process. These videos may help settle nerves and can be seen via this [link](#).

First test – before School re-opens

The first tests will take place over Wednesday 3rd, Thursday 4th and Friday 5th March. These tests will require students to attend the school site within a given 30 minute slot on their allocated day to take their test. Students will need to maintain social distance, wear a mask and leave the site upon taking their test. Parents will be welcome to drive onto the site and may wait in their cars for the duration of the test. You will be notified of the outcome by text and email on the same day as the test (we will endeavour to phone parents if there is a positive).

Testing will be as follows:

- Wednesday 3rd – Years 11, 12 & 13
- Thursday 4th – Years 8 & 10
- Friday 5th – Years 7 & 9

On Monday, we will be emailing all parents to confirm the time slot that your child should attend school for testing.





Staggered return dates & second test

To allow us to conduct the second test and prepare the students for school following a long absence, year groups will have a staggered return date as follows:

- Monday 8th – Years 11, 12 & 13
- Tuesday 9th – Years 8 & 10
- Wednesday 10th – Years 7 & 9

Third test

The third test will take place with the students coming out of lessons on the following days:

- Thursday 11th – Years 11, 12 & 13
- Friday 12th – Years 8 & 10
- Monday 15th – Years 7 & 9

Positive Covid-19 results

If there is a positive result during the first three school tests, the student (and all close contacts) must self-isolate for 10 days. You should not attempt to book any further tests at a local NHS test centre.

Once all students return to school, any positive cases will trigger the same track and trace process that we used previously and anyone in close contact with that individual will be required to self-isolate.

Previous Covid-19 positive cases

If your child has tested positive for Covid-19 in the last 90 days then they are exempt from testing. Please ensure you have informed us of this. You can opt in to testing, but if your child does test positive they will need to self-isolate as will those who have been in close contact.

Home testing

From March 15th students will begin testing at home twice a week. Children aged 11 should have the swab conducted by an adult. All other students can self-swab. Staff will be home testing from 26th February. Home test kits will be distributed to students before 15th March. All instructions will be included and we will write again closer to the time with more information. Once we have switched to home testing, any positive results will need to be followed up with a further test at a local NHS testing centre.

Risk assessments and policies

All risk assessments policies (attendance, behaviour and safeguarding) have been updated to ensure that they are compliant with the most recent government guidelines and advice from professional bodies.

Covid-secure rules

It is important that we all recognise that the return to school does not represent a loosening of our Covid-19 rules. We must all be as vigilant as we were back in September and the students will be reminded of this upon their return from March 8th. This will include:

- The wearing of face masks.





- Year group bubbles, including the use of split break and lunch to keep bubbles apart (with Years 8 and 10 reverting to the off-set timetable).
- Sanitising routines at the start and end of lessons or whenever students enter or leave a room.
- All students will be issued with personal sanitisers (as we did in September, following another generous donation from the community).
- New operating procedures in the canteen with the use of screens, visors and masks by staff.
- Strict control of movement around the school site.
- Enhanced cleaning regimes.

Any student who fails to properly observe our requirements will be considered a risk to the safety of staff and other students; Mr Bhambra will personally resolve these incidents with parents to ensure that the highest safety standards are maintained. If you are concerned that your son or daughter will struggle to follow the safety instructions, please contact Mr Bhambra as soon as possible.

Face masks

As last term, face masks will continue to be required in corridors and public spaces. From March 8th 2021, all children and adults must wear face coverings in all situations where social distancing of 2m cannot be maintained, including within classrooms. If this is likely to cause your child severe distress, please contact Mr Bhambra (tbhambra@emmbrook.wokingham.sch.uk) in the first instance.

Live lessons

Live lessons will continue throughout the week beginning Monday 1st March, however on days when year groups are being tested, independent work will be set instead of live lessons (this is because students will necessarily need flexibility on these days to be able to attend their test).

During the phased re-opening of the School from Monday 8th, those year groups remaining at home will continue to have live lessons via Teams until they return for face-to-face lessons.

There may be some occasions when staff are required to support the testing programme and will therefore set work in place of a live lesson. You will be notified of this each morning as we have done all term.

School uniform

From Monday 8th all students must return to wearing school uniform. The blazer remains optional (to allow families to wash uniform daily) but must only be replaced by the school jumper or a coat.

PE kit

As a further Covid-19 mitigation measure, students should come to school wearing PE kit each day that they have PE on their timetable. This will reduce the opportunity for close contact between students while changing. Students must be appropriately dressed, as they would be for PE, with school branded tops, suitable bottoms and trainers. Students will not be able to access





the changing rooms. The ultimate judgement of suitable PE kit is ours and we ask that you support our high standards to ensure that this reasonable measure does not deteriorate into a dilution of the uniform in any way.

Vulnerable children and children of critical workers

We will continue to offer critical worker provision for all children already attending until Friday 5th March. This provision will be phased out from 8th March as students return to face-to-face lessons:

- Monday 8th – provision for students in Years 7-10
- Tuesday 9th – provision for students in Years 7 & 9 only

As there will be other students in school and wearing uniform, from Monday 8th the students in critical worker provision will be required to wear school uniform.

With regret, given the significant logistical challenges of the next 10 days, we are no longer able to accept new students to this provision. Please let Mr Bhambra know if you intend to continue your child's attending over Monday 8th or Tuesday 9th by Friday 5th March.

New Covid-19 cases

If your child tests positive for Covid-19 please notify us (even if your child is not currently attending the school site) using covid@emmbrook.wokingham.sch.uk. If your child has any Covid-19 symptoms they must be kept away from school until a test is booked and the result received.

Attendance

The government have advised that all children must attend school from March 8th. As this is a legal requirement, can you please let your son or daughter's year leader know as soon as possible if there is likely to be an issue with this.

Visitors

We ask that parents do not come onto the school site. Please contact reception by phone or email if required.

Offline Day – Thursday 4th March – World Book Day

As previously announced, on Thursday we will hold our final Offline Day. There will be activities linked to World Book Day.

GCSE & A-level Exams

As I write the arrangement for this summer's GCSE and A-level exams are being announced. It appears that assessments will be determined by teachers using a range of evidence including internal assessments, mock exams and potentially exam board set questions. Mr Whitehouse will produce a coherent plan and this will be communicated with parents and students next week.

If you have a child in Years 11 or 13 please encourage them to continue to engage with remote learning and to stay on top of the work being set by teachers. We will be working tirelessly to ensure that every student is assessed fairly and that they can all advance to the next stage of their education. Last year, I committed to our Year 11s that I would do everything in my power





to support their entry into our Sixth Form and I make the same commitment to the current Year 11.

IT upgrades

I am pleased to share that we have taken advantage of the relatively quiet period here to significantly upgrade large parts of the IT infrastructure. This includes upgrades to the network and all new computers in H1.2, H2.5, H2.10, M2.6 and the library. Students will notice a significant improvement in performance when they return to school.

There is a lot of information in this letter and if you have any questions please do contact me.

Best wishes,

Nick McSweeney
 Headteacher

Overview

Summary of dates contained in this update:

Week Beginning	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Monday 1st			Test 1 for 11, 12 & 13	Test 1 for 8 & 10	Test 1 for 7 & 9
	Live lessons will continue during this week (year groups will be set independent study via Teams instead of live lessons on their testing days)				
	Critical worker provision continues for current students only				
Monday 8th	Return to school & test 2 for 11, 12 & 13	Return to school & test 2 for 8 & 10	Return to school & test 2 for 7 & 9	Test 3 for 11, 12 & 13	Test 3 for 8 & 10
	Live lessons for 7-10	Live lessons for 7 & 9 only	No live lessons provided via Teams		
	Critical worker provision for year groups not in school		No critical worker provision required		
Monday 15th	Test 3 for 7 & 9	Home testing begins			
	No live lessons provided via Teams				

