

Thursday 25th February, 2021.



Penketh High School

Dear Parents and Guardians,

We are very much looking forward to pupils returning to school from Monday the 8th of March, 2020. As I'm sure you're aware schools have been provided with comprehensive guidance from the government regarding the process for reopening and for logistical operations once pupils return.

Fortunately most of the hard work that went into preparations last summer for the new school year has served us well and we don't need to change too many of our arrangements to adhere to the latest guidance. School will operate as before Christmas with year groups starting and finishing on a staggered basis. Their timetables will also operate as they do now, so pupils won't experience turbulence in respect of their experience of school.

Parents will be aware that prior to school starting in September we put together a comprehensive information guide providing details of our logistical arrangements for the year ahead and timings for the school day. We have updated this to reflect the latest guidance and the information booklet can be found at the following link;

<https://sway.office.com/CUE009A2D4eZTGLf?ref=Link>

I want to draw your attention to some specific and important changes that we've had to make after the government issued their latest guidance to schools;

Face coverings

The latest government guidance for reopening from the 8th of March states; ***"In addition, we now also recommend in those schools, that face coverings should be worn in classrooms or during activities unless social distancing can be maintained. We are taking this additional precautionary measure for a limited time during this period of high coronavirus (COVID-19) prevalence in the community. These measures will be in place until Easter. As with all measures, we will keep it under review and update guidance at that point."***

For the final four weeks of term until Easter we will therefore be asking pupils to wear face coverings during the majority of their time at school - including during lessons as in most cases 2m distancing can't be adhered to. Pupils will not need to wear their face covering whilst they are outside and maintaining social distancing from others, undertaking PE (or other strenuous activity) or whilst they're eating. We would recommend that pupils bring two face coverings to school so that they have a spare should one become damaged. Pupils bringing a reusable face coverings should also bring a small plastic bag to store their face covering when not in use.

The latest guidance is clear that face visors or shields should not be used instead of face coverings but can be used in conjunction with face coverings.

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THE CHALLENGE ACADEMY TRUST C/O PRIESTLEY COLLEGE, LOUSHERS LN, WARRINGTON WA4 6RD. COMPANY NUMBER 10689247

Penketh High School, Heath Road, Penketh, Warrington, WA5 2BY

Tel: 01925 722298 Fax: 01925 723812 e-mail: principal@penketh.warrington.sch.uk Website: www.penkethhighschool.co.uk

Principal: Mr J Carlin BA(Hons) NPQH





We have a list of pupils medically exempt from wearing face coverings from the Autumn term, parents do not need to notify us again as we have this recorded. Should you have any queries, however, please contact your child's year head.

We will, of course, monitor the latest guidance from the government as it is issued and inform parents of any changes.

Mass asymptomatic testing

We will be offering all pupils and staff the opportunity to undertake asymptomatic testing in school upon their return. The guidance from the government states;

"Rapid testing using Lateral Flow Devices (LFD)s will support the return to face-to-face education by helping to identify people who are infectious but do not have any coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms. For secondary school staff and pupils we are moving to a home testing model (for pupils, following the first 3 onsite tests). The lateral flow devices used have received regulatory approval from the MHRA for self-use. Home test kits will be available for all staff on return. Once pupils have been tested 3 times at school, they will be provided with home test kits for regular testing."

We are therefore going to be offering testing in school for all pupils upon their return and upon the completion of their third test pupils will be provided with testing kits to undertake this process at home. We will, of course, provide necessary training materials for pupils and parents to consult so as to support the execution of home testing.

Children of keyworkers and vulnerable children who have been present in school will know that we commenced our testing programme upon our return in January for all those pupils still in attendance. Our experience of testing pupils and staff has been that the process is straightforward and relatively quick; but the time to register for the test can be lengthy which really slows the process down. So we are going to register pupils for testing en masse, this will mean that parents will receive notification directly from the school of positive results, with a copy of their child's test result going to their pupil email account.

Parents will need to register their child for asymptomatic testing at school by completing an electronic registration and consent form by Monday 1st of March at 8pm this is available here;

[Registration Form](#)

We would like to stress that pupils should **NOT** attend school to undertake a test if they are symptomatic. If pupils have symptoms of COVID-19 they should commence a period of self-isolation and seek a PCR Test through the NHS. Details relating to symptoms, self-isolation and how to book a test can be found here; <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nhs-test-and-trace-how-it-works#part-1-people-who-develop-symptoms-of-coronavirus>

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Schedule of return

The guidance we have received is clear that pupils who are undertaking asymptomatic testing in school can only return to lessons after they have received their first negative test result. Whilst we have undertaken testing already this term, we haven't undertaken the testing on the scale proposed from the 8th of March. To meet the guidance pupils need to undertake each of their three in-school tests 3-5 days apart which poses some logistical problems for schools.

I'm informed that schools in Liverpool who undertook mass testing back in November/December took a number of days to test their whole cohort but this was done with the support of military personnel deployed to conduct the testing process. Obviously schools are now not receiving this level of support to conduct testing. The government have been clear that pupils can return from the 8th of March on a staggered basis to allow for testing to be completed and for pupils to receive their first negative test result before returning to class. Quite naturally our concern is that the scale of testing required would mean that in this scenario some year groups would not be returning until as late as the 15th of March for face-to-face teaching; but we want pupils to return to school as quickly as possible.

It is our intention therefore to commence the testing of pupils prior to the 8th of March so that we can bring some year groups back as early as possible and to also get ahead with our testing to prevent any unnecessary delays in the return of other groups. We therefore propose the following schedule of return;

		Testing AM	Testing PM	In school for face-to-face lessons
4th March	Thursday	Year 11	Year 11	
	Friday	Year 9	Year 10	
	Saturday			
	Sunday			
8th March	Monday	Year 11	Year 10	Year 9, 10 and 11
	Tuesday	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9, 10 and 11
	Wednesday	Year 9		All
	Thursday	Year 11	Year 10	All
	Friday	Year 8	Year 7	All
	Saturday			
	Sunday			

This schedule means that all pupils will return to school for face-to-face teaching no later than Wednesday 10th of March. Year 9, 10 and 11 will return to school for teaching from Monday the 8th of March and Year 7 and 8 from Wednesday 10th of March. Year 7 and 8 will continue to undertake remote learning inline with their school timetable across Monday 8th and Tuesday 9th of March. We will maintain the provision for keyworker and vulnerable pupils in Year 7 and 8 on Monday the 8th of March and Tuesday 9th of March. Though pupils being tested in Year 7 and 8 will be provided with a time to come to school for their first test on Tuesday 9th of March.



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Year 9, 10 and 11 will be given a time to come to school on Thursday the 4th of March or Friday 5th of March to undertake their test; this will mean that they will have hopefully received their first negative result prior to the 8th so that they can commence lessons in school immediately. Their second test will take place on Monday 8th of March whilst they are in school within the 3-5 day window since their first test.

With all year groups, once they have received their first negative result prior to commencing face-to-face teaching, all subsequent testing can be done once they have returned to school. All year groups will have completed their three in school tests by Tuesday 16th of March and will be undertaking home testing from this point.

Again, prior to pupils undertaking testing, parents need to complete the registration and consent form, the link to which is above.

Year 11

The outcome of the Ofqual's consultation on the awarding of GCSE grades has been published today. We are already fairly advanced in our planning for this. It is our intention to forward finalised plans for the remainder of the year to pupils and parents before their return to school on the 8th of March. Our plans are centred around providing pupils with opportunities to perform and demonstrate the levels they are capable of working at so that they can secure the grade that they deserve and maximise the remaining time in school. We will be doing everything that we can to ensure that they have our full support and backing to be successful this year.

Uniform

Parents will know that we place great emphasis on our uniform and feel that this is a reflection of the high expectations that we set for pupils that have served us well over the last few years. Our uniform expectations are clearly identified in the afore mentioned pupil and parent information guide. We do, however, recognise that there might be some outstanding uniform issues that can't be resolved because retail has been closed during the period of lockdown. It is not our intention to penalise pupils, our priority at this time is getting them back to school and making progress.

If there are any issues relating to pupil uniform please contact your child's form tutor or year leader so that we can notify staff and work with you to resolve issues in time.

Parents evening and reports

It is our intention that we will undertake a virtual parents evening for all year groups between now and the summer. This will afford parents the opportunity to speak to their child's subject teachers. We will notify parents of revised dates for these events.



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We've been incredibly impressed with the dedication shown by pupils towards their studies during the period of remote learning; but we all know that face-to-face learning can't be replaced. We also know how incredibly important social interactions are for pupil development and so it's important that pupils return to school, we are very much looking forward to their return.

Can I take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support and your kind words of encouragement. They have meant a great to the staff during what as been a challenging time for everyone.

Yours sincerely,

Mr J Carlin.
Principal.



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