



25th February 2021

Dear Parents / Carers

Re: Plans for return to school from 8th March 2021

I hope that you and your families are safe and well and that you have enjoyed a restful half-term break.

Following the government announcement on 22nd February 2021, I am delighted to be able to share the news we have all been eagerly awaiting about the arrangements for the return of all our students to Teesdale School during the course of the week commencing 8th March 2021. We are very much looking forward to welcoming them back safely!

There is a large amount of quite detailed information here, so I have organised it as follows:

1. An overview of the return to school plans
2. A timetable for Covid testing and return to school
3. Appointment times for students
4. Information about our procedures for attending school during the pandemic - any new information in this section is underlined.

We continue to be extremely grateful for your support and encouragement as we work on what we all hope will be the last phase of this exceptionally challenging time for everyone. To help the return to school run as smoothly as possible, please can you go through the following checklist and get in touch if there is anything you need more help with, or information about, and as ever, we will do our very best to help you:

- Complete and return the consent form for Covid testing by following the link below. **Please complete this form by Monday 1st March 2021 (9am)** in order that we can allocate appointment times.

<https://tinyurl.com/y62evb8u>

- Check that you and your child know which day and time they will attend school for their first Covid test (appointment times will be sent separately).
- Check that you and your child know which day they will return to school for face-to-face teaching, and remind yourselves of the start and finish time for their year group.
- Check that your child has the uniform and equipment they require for the start of term, as outlined in this letter.
- Consider how your child will travel to school and, if using school or public transport, that they understand the guidance for safe travel.

We have had lots of positive feedback about the high quality of the virtual learning and support we have provided for our students but there really is nothing to match a real lesson with real students in a real classroom and we can't wait to get back to it. The government will review guidance for schools again before the Easter

holiday, and we will, of course, continue to keep you updated with any further changes. Once again, I would like to thank you for your ongoing support in these difficult times.

With very best wishes to you, your family and friends.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D Pilling', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Mr D Pilling
Head of School

3. Appointment times for students

Arrangements for Covid testing

- Please make sure your child arrives promptly for their test at the allotted time.
- If you are accompanying your child to school, you must wait in the car park as we still cannot allow additional people onto the school site.
- Your child should enter the building through the main entrance and staff will direct him/her to the testing area.
- Once the test is complete your child will need to leave the building and return home.
- The result of the test will be sent after the morning or afternoon session, to the email/mobile phone number provided on the consent form.
- If the test is positive then you need to follow the guidance for households with possible coronavirus infection. More information will be in the test results email from the NHS.
- Rapid testing will support the return to school for all our students by helping to identify those who are infectious but do not have any Covid-19 symptoms. Tests are self-administered lateral flow tests.
- All our students will be registered with the NHS Test & Trace service as part of the testing process.
- Once our students have been tested three times in school, they will be provided with home kits for regular testing. Testing remains voluntary but is strongly encouraged. Further information about the testing process and consent will be sent separately.

For the first Covid test, your child will be invited for Covid testing in tutor group order; **appointment times are listed below.**

	Monday 8 th March	Tuesday 9 th March	Wednesday 10 th March
9.00am – 9.30am	11A	9A	7A
9.30am – 10.00am	11B	9B	7B
10.30am – 11.00am	11C	9C	7C
11.00am – 11.30am	11D	9D	7D
1.00pm – 1.30pm		10A	7E
1.30pm – 2.00pm	12A	10B	8A
2.00pm – 2.30pm	12B	10C	8B
2.30pm – 3.00pm	13A	10D	8C
3.00pm – 3.30pm	13B	10E	8D
3.30pm – 4.00pm			8E

4. Information about our procedures for attending school during the pandemic. New information is underlined.

Your child will return to school for face-to-face teaching the day after their first negative Covid test. They will attend school at their usual time, as summarised in the table below:

	Start time	Finish time	Entrance / Exit
Year 7	8.40am	2.50pm	N Block Canopy
Year 8	8.40am	2.50pm	Vibrancy Area
Year 9	8.40am	2.55pm	S2 Doors
Year 10	8.40am	2.55pm	Dining Hall
Year 11	8.40am	2.55pm	Main Entrance
Sixth Form	8.40am	2.55pm	S6 Doors

In line with the updated Government guidance, we continue to have measures in place to keep our students safe in school. These include enhanced levels of cleaning, handwashing and respiratory hygiene. We also have measures in place to ensure groups of students are kept separate and that mixing between them is kept to a minimum. Year groups are organised into bubbles which are taught in different zones of the school and which have separate social areas. Teachers move between bubbles, maintaining social distance from students, so that the full curriculum can be taught. Students are very familiar with these procedures, which were in place throughout the Autumn Term.

In addition to existing measures, all students and staff are now required to wear face coverings in classrooms as well as in public areas of the school (for example corridors and dining areas). We ask that for their return to school you ensure your child has a supply of suitable face coverings (plain, dark colours are preferable), and that these are cleaned regularly and stored in a plastic bag when not in use. Students who are exempt from wearing a face covering will not have to wear one.

Lunch arrangements

Existing lunch arrangements will continue at least until the Easter holiday. At breaktime, students will be outside in their zone area or in their designated social spaces inside the building.

At lunchtime, students will eat in their designated lunch area and have some time outside (weather permitting). Lunches will continue to be provided in the social areas until Easter.

Uniform and equipment

All students should be in full school uniform when they return.

Students should bring a bag to school with them each day containing the following:

- Pencil case containing pen, pencil, ruler, rubber, scientific calculator (spares are advised, as due to health and safety restrictions we cannot allow students to share or borrow equipment).
- Water bottle containing enough water to last the full school day (water fountains remain switched off due to health and safety restrictions).
- Packed lunch if chosen.

PE lessons

Please note that due to the ongoing restrictions, PE lessons will continue in the existing format and students can attend school in their PE kits on the day they have PE.

Travel to school

The government advises parents that the safest methods of travel to school are walking or cycling. Car journeys should not be shared between people from different households. Students are reminded that face coverings must be worn on public transport.

Behaviour

It is more important than ever that when they return to school, students follow all the rules which are in place, particularly in relation to hygiene, wearing of face coverings, distancing and movement around school. We will continue to work with students and parents to make sure our expectations are clearly and regularly communicated.

Attendance

From 8th March 2021, it will once again become the legal duty of parents to ensure their children attend school regularly and on time. As a school, we will work with pupils and their families to support parents to meet these legal duties and to ensure children can benefit from attending school regularly. Where you have concerns regarding attendance, we would ask that you contact school as soon as possible (office@teesdaleschool.co.uk) to discuss this with our attendance officer Mrs Eames. Where children are not able to attend school as parents are following clinical and/or public health advice, absence will not be penalised.

Coronavirus symptoms

If your child, or a member of their household, has any of the following symptoms:

- new and persistent cough
- a high temperature (feeling hot to the touch)
- loss of, or change in, their normal sense of taste or smell

then **the following actions must be taken immediately:**

- Do not attend school
- Report the reason for absence to school
- Self-isolate
- Arrange a PCR coronavirus test through www.nhs.uk/coronavirus or call 119
- Provide school with the results of that test

Key Worker students

If your child attends school due to parents/carers being key workers, they will still attend school as normal during the phased return, until their specific year group has had their first test. Until the test takes place, key worker children will remain in their own 'key worker bubble' whilst in school. Key worker pupils will re-join their own classes again upon the return of their year group.