



26 February 2021

Dear Parent/Guardian

Returning to School - Further Information

I wanted to write to you and give you further information about reopening, testing and other aspects of the next few weeks that you might find useful. We have been ready for the opening of schools and testing since January, but the recent announcement was slightly different to what was expected, and as a result we are currently working hard to fine tune our plans. I will write with a full plan next week but felt it would be helpful to arm you all with as much information as possible so you can begin talking to your children and prepare them for the physical return.

The guidance has changed slightly, but not significantly, and therefore some points below are the same as our September opening and act as a reminder. Other parts are new so please do read this letter in full.

Testing and physical return dates

We have now devised the rota for testing and this is in the tables below. We will be using Tuesday as a cut off point for giving consent for testing to ensure we can staff the testing centre appropriately. This is a significant undertaking and with current consent numbers it is likely that we will be carrying out at least 4500 tests over a two-and-a-half-week period, alongside having over 1800 students on site. I would like to thank you and the students in advance for your patience on any issues that may arise.

When coming onto school site for testing students should be in full school uniform including school shoes.

Week commencing 1 March 2021

	Thursday 4
Year tested	11 & 13 & Violet College

Week 2 commencing 8 March 2021

Day	Monday 8	Tuesday 9	Wednesday 10	Thursday 11	Friday 12	Saturday 13
Year tested	11 & 13 & Violet College	10 & 12	8 & 9	7	11 & 13 Violet College	10 & 12

Week 3 commencing 15 March 2021

Day	Monday 15	Tuesday 16	Wednesday 17	Thursday 18	Friday 19
Year tested	8 & 9	7	10 & 12	8 & 9	7

Specific time slots for testing will be provided in advance of tests. Students will be grouped in tutor groups for the first test.

The return dates to physical school are therefore as follows:

Year Group	Return date
Year 11, 13 and Violet College	Tuesday 9 March
Year 10 & 12	Wednesday 10 March
Year 9 & 8	Thursday 11 March
Year 7	Friday 12 March

Please note:

On the day of a year group's test there will be no live lessons but work will be set for each subject on Google Classroom.

In the week commencing 8 March, where students are still at home, the timetable timings will continue to follow the remote plan.

Monday 8 March is an INSET and no work will be set.

The link for testing consent is here:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScK_EOm8IXkl23-f3ZiIII6brf-K-yh93tonjCofA2opzpDA/viewform?usp=sf_link

Following three tests, students will be offered home testing kits which contain instructions (more information to follow) and these can be started after their third test and no earlier than week commencing 15 March.

A video about testing can be found here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O_oYnJxgbf0

If your child has tested positive for COVID in the last 90 days NHS guidance states that they are exempt from retesting for 90 days unless new symptoms develop. This is due to fragments of inactive virus still being potentially present.

Back to school arrangements

Arrival times

Once again, to minimise the risk of 1800 students arriving and leaving site, we will be re-introducing our staggered start and end times for the school day. These are below:

The times below are when we expect students to arrive at school, and in addition, we are asking students to use different entrances which are also laid out below (**for 6th form we will be sending a letter out on Monday outlining plans for these students as these are different to the main school**):

Arrival Time	Year Group	Entrance	Year Group	Entrance
8.30am	7	Silverdale Road Entrance		
8.35am	8	Silverdale Road Entrance	10	Maiden Erleigh Drive Entrance
8.40am	9	Silverdale Road Entrance	11	Maiden Erleigh Drive Entrance

If students are scheduled to enter via the Silverdale Road entrance, we are asking that they do not walk down Maiden Erleigh Drive but instead walk around to the front of school and enter from Silverdale Road. However, if this is not possible they must walk along the top car park by Aldryngton and enter via the Silverdale Road main gate. Likewise, if a student is due to enter via the Maiden Erleigh Drive gate, we are asking that they do not enter via Silverdale Road but enter via Maiden Erleigh Drive. However, if this is not possible they must walk along the top car park and enter via the back gate. This will allow the flow of students to be more controlled, prevent bunching and therefore minimise the risk. We are asking for your support on this to make the entry and exit to school as safe as possible. We accept that this may add time to the journey of some students (we anticipate a max of 15 mins), but to meet Government guidance we must manage the flow of nearly 1900 students and with only 2 gates this is the best way to do so.

The following dismissal times will also be in place:

Departure Time	Year Group	Entrance	Year Group	Entrance
2.55pm (2.20pm)	7	Silverdale Road Entrance	Year 11	Maiden Erleigh Drive Entrance
3.00pm (2.25pm)	8	Silverdale Road Entrance	10	Maiden Erleigh Drive Entrance
3.05pm (2.30pm)	9	Silverdale Road Entrance	12 (when a period 5 (4) is in place)	Maiden Erleigh Drive Entrance
3.10pm (2.35pm)			Year 13 (when a period 5 (4) is in place)	Maiden Erleigh Drive Entrance

I am aware that some students may see this as unfair and as a result we will review the exit times at half term. The exit gates are compulsory and once again we ask for your support on the use of Maiden Erleigh Drive and the Silverdale Road Entrance but where this is not possible we ask that the top car park is used.

Risk minimisation and preventative measures applicable to all students

Hygiene

One of the key barriers to prevent the spread of COVID-19 is good hygiene. We will be regularly reminding students to wash/sanitise their hands and also have a packet of tissues should they have a cold. In the autumn term we asked that students bring their own hand sanitiser to school and we kindly request this again. This will allow students to sanitise their hands regularly and staff will also remind students.

We have also increased the number of wall dispensers and these, alongside toilet soap dispensers, will be checked regularly throughout the day.

Enhanced cleaning

We have put enhanced cleaning measures in place to ensure that the focus is on areas which may be touched regularly by students such as handles and doors. This is in addition to our daily cleaning regime that occurs at the end of each school day.

In areas where different year groups use the same classroom, tables will be wiped down after each lesson.

Face Coverings

The latest guidance from the Government has changed with regards to face coverings. From 8 March the wording has changed to the following:

Where pupils in year 7 (which would be children who were aged 11 on 31 August 2020) and above are educated, we recommend that face coverings should be worn by adults and pupils when moving around the premises, outside of classrooms, such as in corridors and communal areas where social distancing cannot easily be maintained. Face coverings do not need to be worn by pupils when outdoors on the premises.

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. This does not apply in situations where wearing a face covering would impact on the ability to take part in exercise or strenuous activity, for example in PE lessons.

The second paragraph is particularly important and is a change in stance from the Government. We are therefore expecting all students, unless medically exempt, to wear face coverings when inside any building at school. The only exemption to this will be when students are sat down to eat their lunch or when practical PE is taught indoors. The risk of transmission is significantly lower when outside and therefore the wearing of face coverings is optional when out of buildings to allow students the opportunity to have a break from wearing them as they walk around site.

Teachers, when teaching from the 2 metre box at the front of the room will not be required to wear a covering but will be expected to put one on should they leave that space.

If your child is medically exempt from wearing a face covering and you have not previously informed us, please email the school office with the reason FAO Mr Garner.

One-way system

A strict one-way system will be in place and marked clearly in all buildings. Outside of buildings students should keep to the left at all times. Students will be reminded of this on their return to school.

Bubbling

Lessons will continue to follow the current timetable to allow students to be 'bubbled' in an area and minimise any contact with other year groups. This reduces risk and also allows us to trace any potential contacts easily. Students will predominantly be based in the blocks as below:

Year 7 – Lower School
Year 8 – N and P block
Year 9 – G Corridor
Year 10 – H Corridor
Year 11 – L Corridor
Year 12 – F Corridor
Year 13 – B, S and C Block

Students will still have lessons outside these areas where specialist rooms are required such as Science, PE, and Technology etc as we want to minimise risk but also provide a full curriculum offer. All subjects outside of normal classroom working practices have conducted risk assessments for their areas. PE lessons will, whenever possible, be taking place outside to further reduce risk.

At break time students will be expected to stay in their assigned area and at lunch the students will eat in the following places:

Year 7 – Lower School Hall (over 3 snack breaks)

Year 9 – Dining Room 1 (over 3 snack breaks)
Years 8, 10 & 11 – Dining Room 2 (1 snack break per year group)
Year 12 & 13 – see separate letter to be sent on Monday

Whilst hot food will be available in these areas, we are encouraging all students, including 6th form, to bring a packed lunch to school to help us manage the queues and maintain the safety of students and staff.

Perspex Screens

To ensure we are able to accommodate all students safely at lunch, students who will be eating in the larger dining room (Year 8, 10 and 11) will be able to face each other whilst eating following the installation of over 50 Perspex screens. In other areas, such as the Lower School Hall (Year 7) and the small dining room (Year 9), students will sit side by side eliminating the risk of face to face contact.

In lessons

In lessons, students will be in normal class sizes and all chairs will face the front. The arrangement of rooms into rows means the time spent facing each other is minimised and thus the risk is reduced. The teacher will deliver lessons from the front of the room and there will be a gap of at least 2 metres between them and the students on the front row, again to minimise any risk to both the student and staff member. Should a student need individual support, this will be given from the side or behind.

Where resources need to be given out, these will be shared by the teacher to minimise the number of people touching them. The member of staff will also sanitise their hands before touching the resources each time. Homework will predominantly be submitted via Google Classroom and marked via this platform also. Where work cannot be handed in in this way, there will be a 48 hour window before the member of staff takes them home (if they have to) and a 48 hour window to return the work to minimise the risk.

There will be no shared tools for learning and so it is vital that students bring what is required for school. A letter has been sent out and we appreciate your support in ensuring your child is fully equipped for school.

Windows will be kept open in classrooms, and where extraction air conditioning units are available, these will be used to improve the ventilation.

Clinically Extremely Vulnerable

If your child has received a letter informing them to shield, please contact the school so we can discuss this with you. Unlike September, these students should continue to shield until 31 March and so we need to plan their education carefully.

All other students should return to school on the date highlighted in this letter above. I understand that there will be some anxieties surrounding this and should you have any concerns, please contact the attendance team as soon as possible. We are, however, unable to authorise absence apart from those instructed to shield and so we would like to work with you to help bring students back to school.

I have also received requests about providing online lessons for those who are anxious about coming back to school. We will only be providing work to those who are required, by letter, to shield and any students required to self-isolate.

Academic Progress

We have been monitoring this closely throughout the latest lockdown and have plans in place to support any student who has fallen behind. We are also revisiting our curriculum again to ensure the sequence supports students in being able to hit the ground running when they return. Once back in school we will work with students to ensure that any lost learning is caught up, but this will

be done in a supportive and constructive manner. We will make contact, in due course, with parents where we feel extra intervention is needed.

Summer schools and extended days

There has been a lot of information in the press about the two strategies above. This is something that we are not currently looking at. We want to get students settled back into school and having a sense of normality before we even consider doing something different. We are confident that any lost learning will be resolved, predominantly by Quality First Teaching.

Mental wellbeing

We are aware that some students have found this period of lockdown tough, perhaps tougher than previous ones. As a result, tutors and Heads of Year will triage any concerns and pass them onto our inclusion team. We have increased the number of staff who have had Mental Health First Aid training and they will be available to support students. If you are concerned about your child and their mental health, please contact the school office and we will aim to work with them on their return. As always, we are here to support the students and we believe that normal routine will certainly help them settle back in to school quickly.

Uniform

School uniform is expected to be worn in full on testing days and on the physical return to school. The expectations have been outlined in a letter this week. In addition, like the autumn term, students will be expected to come to school in their school PE kit on days when they have practical PE only.

And finally...

Thorough risk assessments have been completed and have been sent to the Trust for approval. We will upload these to our website by Thursday 4 March at the latest.

I will, of course, be providing you with further information about the physical reopening of schools in due course but I hope this reassures you that we are ready to welcome students back to #TeamMaidenErlegh and we cannot wait to have them back on site again!

Yours sincerely



Mr P Gibson
Headteacher