

24 February 2021



Ralph Allen School

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Dear Parent/Carer

As outlined by Mr Johnson on Monday, all schools will be reopening for all pupils on 8 March. This is great news and although schools have provided an excellent online provision during lockdown, students need to be in schools with their peers and learning in the classroom. We were unsure whether all students would be returning or just examination classes, so the decision for all students to return is a welcome one.

Many of the guidelines were expected and are similar to what has been in place since September. The exception is that students are now required to wear face coverings in lessons. We are also required to test students three times in school before home kits are issued. This will be challenging but necessary for the safe opening of the school.

Plans to reopen

This must be done safely whilst also minimising risk for the whole community. Students will need to be tested prior to attending school full time. This will involve attending the school for a test only and then returning home. If students stay in school, there is a danger that a positive case could lead to the whole year group self-isolating straight away. Nobody would welcome this. Positive cases in BANEs are very low but we want to be extra cautious on the return to schools.

We are awaiting further guidance, but we may be able to test some students next week on site and then continue with a staggered start the week beginning 8 March to allow for further testing. We have two plans and this will depend on whether testing is possible prior to this date. Although I cannot give you the concrete plan just yet, I wanted to give you a basic outline of what to expect.

We do know the following:

- It will be a staggered start with two year groups in each day. This will commence week beginning 8 March
- Students will be tested 3 times over a two-week period
- Students will be provided with home testing kits following this two week period
- The same guidelines and systems will be in place with the addition of wearing face coverings in classrooms

There will be further communication this Friday with exact details on how we will safely reopen from Monday 8 March.

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Consent

If you have not yet completed the consent form for testing of students, please ensure you do this at your earliest convenience. You can find the consent form [here](#).

If you require a paper copy of the form, please phone the main school line which can be found on the footer of this page to request this to be sent to you in the post.

Prior experience

Our experiences of lockdown and returning to school will differ, but our model in September helped to reduce concerns that students had about returning. The staggered reopening helped to alleviate potential issues and helped us embed the systems in school. We will be re-applying the same structure as we welcome everyone back safely and allow a degree of normality to return.

Examinations this year

The consultation process is over and guidelines will be published tomorrow or Friday. We will then need some time to digest and plan. The calendar does state that year 11 mocks are planned on the week beginning 8 March. These will not be taking place. Internal assessments will replace these and will follow the imminent guidelines.

Thank you in advance for your support as we find the best approach for our school context and its community in the re-opening of Ralph Allen to everyone.

With kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'A Greenhough'.

Andy Greenhough

Headteacher

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