

23 February 2021

Dear Parents/ Carers,

I am sure that you are aware of the latest announcements regarding the lockdown and schools in particular. The direction is that all children should be returning to school from Monday 8th March. I'm sure you will agree that this is great news.

In secondary schools, we can stagger pupils' return but they need to return to school for their own social and emotional wellbeing, as well as for educational reasons. We have been directed to run lateral flow device tests for as many pupils as possible before they return. This makes good sense as it means that it is even less likely that someone will unwittingly bring the virus into school (current data suggest that two out of three people with the virus may carry it without showing symptoms). We do need your permission as parents/carers before we can run these LFD tests. Therefore, if you haven't yet given your consent, please could you do so by following the link [HERE](#). This is of course not compulsory but I would stress that giving consent does maximise other people's safety. Staff and many pupils have been swabbing ourselves and carrying out the tests regularly for over six weeks now, and they are really pretty straightforward and painless.

The plan is that pupils, where consent is given, are tested three times in school before and after they return. We will then be allocated tests for pupils to take home and continue to test themselves, under your direction as parents/carers. This will mean that we can then collapse the considerable logistic and staffing process of running the LFD testing in school. However, until this point we will have to manage these staffing and logistical issues. We think we can test one year group over a day so we are looking to start running tests for pupils from the week commencing Monday 1st March (next Monday). We will then look to get year groups, starting off with Year 11 back into school in a staggered re-entry over the week commencing Monday 8th March.

More detail will follow over coming days, and thank you for bearing with us. We do have some staff who still won't be able to be in school for personal health reasons and we need to re-evaluate our whole school risk assessments before we finalise plans. We will most likely be moving to the wearing of face masks in lessons as well as continuing existing control measures, as is being advised by the government. With the very low rates of the virus in our area - and hopefully the vast majority of students as well as staff being tested before coming into school - I would stress that the return should be really safe.

Principal: Mr James O'Connell

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Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "James O'Connell".

James O'Connell
Principal