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Richard Brand: Headteacher

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Dear Parents & Students

By now, you will likely be aware of the details of last night's announcement where the Prime Minister outlined his roadmap out of lockdown, including how and when schools will re-open.

We are delighted that all students are going to be returning to classrooms shortly – it's just not been the same without the students in our classrooms and corridors and we are all very excited to be getting back to some type of normal.

However, there are some details of the re-opening plan which we will need to consider and plan very carefully to ensure that the return to school, including the necessary mass testing, runs smoothly and is successful.

What we do know so far:

- All secondary school and college students will take three COVID-19 tests as they return to the classroom from the 8th March at existing school testing facilities. Schools and colleges will have discretion on how to test students over that week to enable their return to the classroom. After the initial programme of three tests in school or college, students will be provided with 2 rapid tests to use each week at home.
- Staff and students in secondary schools and colleges are advised to wear face coverings in all areas, including classrooms, where social distancing cannot be maintained and as a temporary extra measure.

Based on last night's announcement, the significant challenge that all schools are considering today is how to organise the logistics of the testing programme. Please can we ask all parents and students to be patient whilst we plan how best to do this. We may well need a phased return over 2-3 days at the start of the week beginning Monday 8th March to allow this testing to take place safely, but we will communicate the finer details of this plan and when your child can return to face to face lessons in school with you as soon as we are able.

We are confident that enhanced testing of staff and students ahead of their return to secondary schools, alongside strengthened safety measures and the existing bubble system, will go a long way towards reassuring students, parents and staff that we can now safely return to our classrooms.

We are still awaiting further guidance around how GCSE grades will be awarded in the absence of summer exams but will communicate with parents and students as soon as we know more.

Yours sincerely

Richard Brand
Headteacher

