

5<sup>th</sup> March 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

Following a particularly unique week at school, I wanted to update you ahead of the wider opening of the school on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> March. The first stage of the building work on our school expansion started on Monday. Hopefully our new kitchens and Hall extension should be completed by the start of term in September. Other important updates and reminders are as follows:

## 1 Lateral Flow Device TESTING

The return to school is in sight which we (and I am sure you) are delighted about. Before we get into details around coming back to school, I want to let you know how successful our LFD testing programme has been. **We have managed to process approximately 2700 LFD tests this week**, a considerable achievement that has only been possible because of your support and the impeccable conduct of every one of the students who has walked through the door this week. Your children have been without exception polite, co-operative and responsible. The staff and volunteers involved in the testing are overflowing with praise for them, they are an absolute credit to you and you should rightly be very proud. As a staff we appreciate the support we have received from our parents and the wider community; you have made an exceptionally difficult time much more easy to navigate.

**We have had one positive test and they have identified a close contact**, so the bad news is that a couple of students have to self-isolate for 10 days, but the good news is that our school community is safer as a result of identifying asymptomatic carrier(s) of the virus.

**Testing will continue on Monday for students with a surname beginning A-J and Tuesday for students with a surname beginning K-Z.** It is important that students continue to be tested prior to the return to school to ensure a safe return for everyone as the virus continues to exist locally.

**Meanwhile, online learning will continue until the school opens to students on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> March.**

The government have announced the expectation that going forwards students and staff will be able to take LFD tests at home, twice weekly. Please be aware we do not yet have a supply of home test kits for students; we will advise when they become available.

## 2 RETURN TO SCHOOL

As we made an early start to the testing, **all our students will return to school on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> March (Week B timetable).** Most will be looking forward to getting back into lessons and seeing their friends and teachers; others may be feeling a little apprehensive. One of the ways we can help lower anxiety is to be prepared to return, whilst some things may have changed during lockdown (they all seem to have got a lot taller!) most **other things remain the same and this includes school rules and expectations.**

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#### Mr N Wallace – Headteacher

Stratford upon Avon School, a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales under number 07690776, whose registered office is Stratford upon Avon School, Alcester Road, Stratford upon Avon, Warwickshire, CV37 9DH

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**Please note that we still expect students to be on site by 8.45am** with lessons beginning at 8.50am. This applies to all students, including Sixth Formers with 'free' periods.

### **3 CONTROL MEASURES**

As a school, we will continue to implement a series of control measures to limit the likelihood of the virus transmitting, to keep students and staff as safe as possible. These **will continue from last term**, including separate 'bubbled' entrances and exits, hand sanitiser on entering the building and different rooms, keeping the building well ventilated, face coverings being worn, and a staggered departure at the end of the day.

### **4 FACE COVERINGS**

**The main additional control measure is the expectation that face coverings will be worn in classrooms as well as in corridors and communal areas.** The government have updated their guidance on Face coverings in education, stating that:

*"Where pupils and students in year 7 and above are educated, we recommend that face coverings should be worn by staff, pupils and students 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 and students when outdoors on the premises. In addition, we now also recommend that in those settings where pupils and students in year 7 and above are educated, face coverings should be worn in classrooms and during activities unless social distancing can be maintained.*

***This is a temporary measure and will be reviewed at Easter, in partnership with health experts, to decide whether evidence suggests that these measures can be eased ahead of the summer term.***

Our expectation is that parents, students and staff will understand the bigger picture and be supportive of our measures to ensure a safe return to face-to-face education.

### **5 'LOCKDOWN MAKEOVERS'**

A few students seem to have taken the opportunity to have a '**lockdown makeover**'. **If your child has had an extreme / unnatural hair colour over the time we have been closed, please ensure it is returned to something school appropriate before they return.** 'School appropriate' means natural looking hair colours rather than the blue, green or pink some may favour when not in school. Some may choose to wear facial piercings when not in school, however our uniform policy is that these should not be worn in school. There is no "cooling off period" here, the piercing may not be worn for 6 weeks until it can be removed neither can it be covered with a plaster. **We have a clear policy of no facial piercings.**

Whilst it can be tempting to think these things do not matter and they do not impact on their education that is simply not true. Getting yourself in the right frame of mind for school means leaving some aspects of our personal likes / dislike at the school gate. **It is a lesson in life that, like it or not, some things are not negotiable;** for us uniform is one of those things. Students coming to school in incorrect uniform end up involved in a confrontation with staff; if the day starts like that it rarely goes well. None of us wants to start the return to school by challenging students over uniform. We have faced many challenges over the last 12 months most of them unavoidable, a conflict over hair colour and piercings is avoidable, we appreciate your support in ensuring everyone sets off on the right foot.

### **6 UNIFORM**

As with hair colour and face coverings, we are expecting students to return to school in full, correct uniform. We will endeavour to keep the building well-ventilated, so students may wish to wear **additional layers under their blazer** to help keep warm during the day. However, these **should still be in keeping**

**with uniform expectations e.g. plain white vest or t shirt, plain navy blue, black or grey jumper or sweatshirt with the shirt and tie.** In the absence of lockers, students will need to keep coats with them during the day. Students are encouraged to wear their blazer as an additional layer over their PE kit.

## **7 RETURNING TO ROUTINES**

Some students are out of the routine of getting up and out of the door on time. Some were looking rather sleepy at 9am this week, **it is worth resetting the body clock for the few days in the run up to Wednesday so the alarm doesn't come as too much of a shock.** Please ensure that you re-establish regular routines with appropriate bedtimes, waking up times and ensuring students have the correct equipment. Bags packed with planners will also help avoid the panic that comes with not knowing where you are going because your planner and timetable are at home.

## **8 EXTRA CURRICULAR PE**

Extra-curricular PE activities **will start again on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> March.** Further details will be communicated next week.

## **9 EXAMINATIONS UPDATE**

We are in the process of finalising details of how we will be assessing Year 11 and 13 students this summer and will share details with them when they return.

## **10 STUDENTS FEELING UNWELL**

Whilst most people will be eager to return to a greater sense of normality, may I remind you of the need to keep your child at home until you are sure they do not have Covid. Symptoms include the previously publicised symptoms of Covid (**cough / high temperature / loss of taste and smell**), but also note that children and younger adults with Covid are **suffering sore throats, muscle aches and severe fatigue.** We appreciate that school attendance may be lower for individuals and the school as a whole but the safety of the school community is everyone's priority at the moment.

## **11 NOTIFYING US OF A POSITIVE COVID TEST**

May I also remind you that **in the event that your family has a positive Covid-19 test, please notify us immediately via [Covid19@stratfordschool.co.uk](mailto:Covid19@stratfordschool.co.uk).** This will enable us to respond promptly. I will contact parents via groupcall with Covid-19 related information when it may affect your child and we will also continue to update key information regarding Covid-19 on our website.

And finally, with education likely to be making the news over the next few days, I have been invited to review the newspapers on **BBC Coventry and Warwickshire Radio tomorrow morning at 7.45am.** Please tune in if you get the chance via [BBC CWR - Breakfast on BBC CWR, 06/03/2021: Lorna Bailey](#)

We are grateful for your ongoing support and understanding. I am very proud to be Headteacher serving a wider school community that values the safety of others. Congratulations to students, parents and staff for endeavouring to make the most of the imperfect situation we have faced. We look forward to the prospect of a successful physical return to school next Wednesday. With very best wishes,

Yours sincerely,



Neil Wallace, Headteacher