

2nd March 2021

## **Return to School**

Dear Students and Parents,

I hope you and your family are well during this time.

We have discussed the return of students to school on Monday 8th March and I would like to communicate the following arrangements to you.

All students are due to return to school on Monday. The good news is that the rate of infection has dropped substantially, with rates of infection that are close to what they were in early autumn. More information is available here: <https://coronavirus.data.gov.uk/>

### **Testing (Lateral Flow Devices)**

Students are not obliged to be tested for COVID-19 in order to return to school, however we very much hope that they will see that this is a good thing to do which can help to keep their families, their peers and themselves safe for the coming weeks and months.

In order to facilitate efficient Lateral Flow Device testing of students on Monday we would like to test during period 1 and 2 on the Monday. Students are to arrive for 9.30am and will be given study periods until 11.30am. The lesson scheduled for P2 will be delivered P2 on Tuesday in your usual timetabled free lesson.

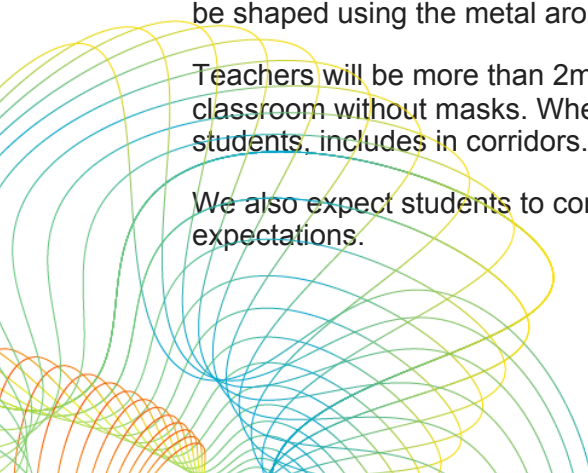
Students will be able to get an in school test at our on site test facility in Dave's classroom. We have scheduled these to avoid queuing and this schedule will be shared separately.

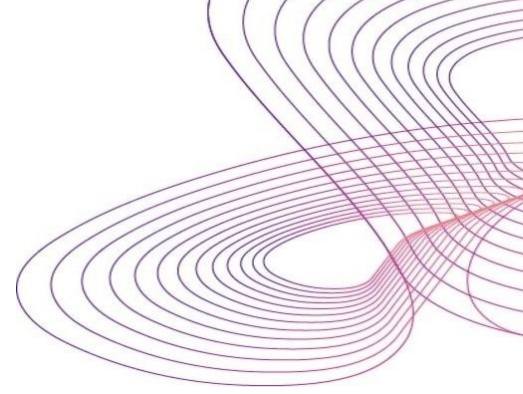
We are working to keep our school as safe as possible. The guidance for schools is largely similar to what we had before Christmas; everyone must wear masks in corridors and communal areas where the 2m social distancing can not be maintained. This is now extended to classrooms and so students will be required to wear them for most times of the day. This is until Easter at least according to the most recently published guidance. Students will stay in the same place for each lesson so only one other person uses that desk.

We are not aware of any students who are exempt from wearing masks. Any students who wear glasses and have an issue with them steaming up can wear the masks provided in school. These can be shaped using the metal around the nose to prevent glasses steaming up.

Teachers will be more than 2m away and will be able to still communicate clearly at the front of the classroom without masks. Where teachers cannot keep 2m away we will also wear masks which, like students, includes in corridors.

We also expect students to continue to wash hands and sanitise regularly and keep up good hygiene expectations.





In study rooms desks have been moved apart so that students can sit 2m apart without wearing masks. We ask that they only sit at their own desk and not someone else's, and if they get up to move around or leave the room that they put on their mask.

Study rooms need to have doors propped open and the windows just opened a small amount to help air circulation. All classrooms have mechanical air ventilation, but not the study rooms so this extra step is needed.

We also do not want students to go to other study rooms, they should only use ones where they have their own desk. There are spare work spaces, especially on the 2nd floor next to Dave's office and in the conservatory too.

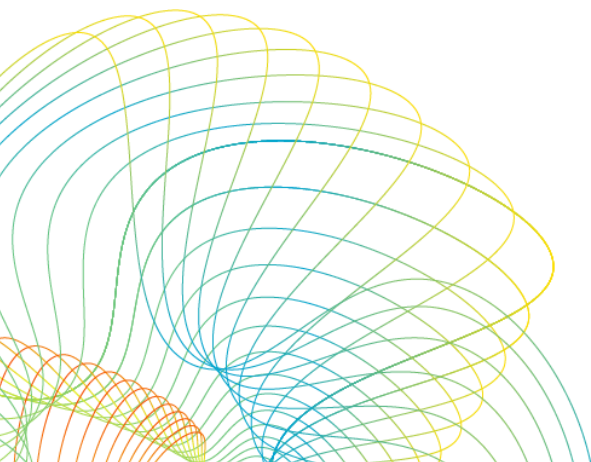
### **What will school life be like when students return?**

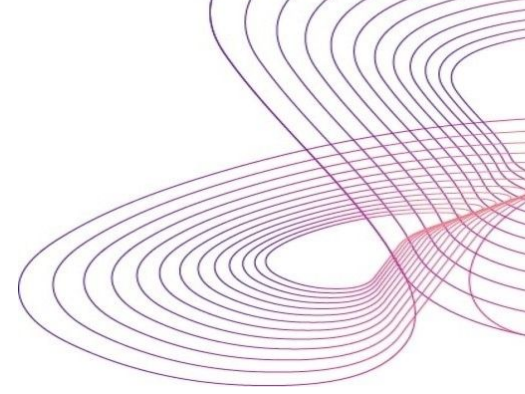
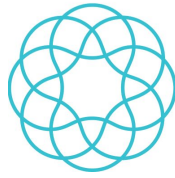
In many ways life will continue as it did before Christmas. However, there will be two noticeable changes in addition to the regular COVID testing mentioned later.

1. We plan to continue the "Supervision" sessions that were so successful in the online learning into our normal school timetable in school. We will provide students with more detail of this over the course of this week.
2. We will also have a tutor group session on Monday 8th March, and two other sessions for one-to-one meetings between tutors and students, you will only be required to attend your one to one for 10 mins once a fortnight.

These changes have been made in response to students' positive feedback about supervisions during the recent lockdown period. We have consulted with the students to ensure that we take the best from what the new situation has taught us about what works for them. The supervisions are made possible by changing the way we use tutor periods and adjusting normal lesson length from 60 minutes to 55 minutes. These changes mean that students get more time working in small groups, whilst also gaining nearly 2 hours of planned time in the fortnight to complete independent work and homework. We are still working on the timetable model for next year and hope to be able to retain some small group supervisions but I should be clear that staffing ratios will not be as generous in future years as they have been in our first year, so we will not be able to replicate exactly the same model in future.

We hope that the overall effect of these changes will be to improve learning and the quality of students' experiences in school whilst reducing anxiety for everyone. As always, we'll be very interested to receive feedback from students and parents about the impact of these changes - please do feel free to drop us a line to let us know how things are going from your perspective.





## **NHS Test and Trace: COVID-19 testing for staff and students**

### **On-Site Testing**

You may have heard that testing for those without coronavirus symptoms is beginning across the country using new, quicker COVID-19 tests known as 'Lateral Flow Device (LFD) tests'.

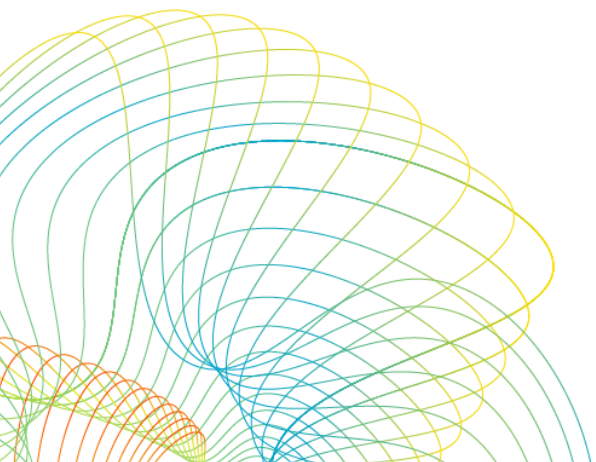
Along with the other protective measures we are taking, these tests will help staff and students to remain in school safely. Up to one third of people who have coronavirus experience no symptoms. By testing we will help to reduce the probability of the virus spreading in school and help to keep our school as safe as possible. The test is voluntary but, as far as we are aware, there are no significant risks associated with taking it. I would encourage everyone to be tested as regularly as possible.

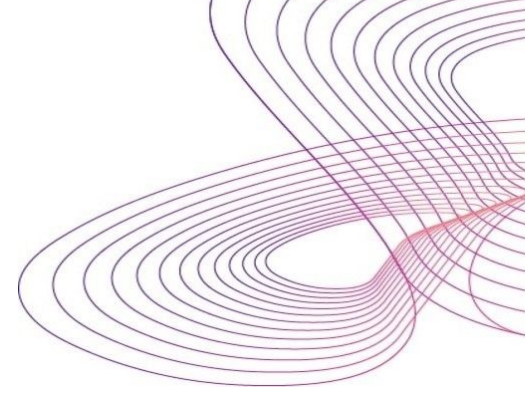
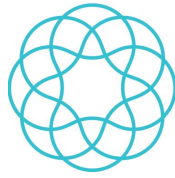
We will be testing all students who want to participate upon their return to ULMaS. Students who want to participate will be tested three times upon their return to school; on-site lateral flow testing will take place on **Monday 8th March 9.30-11.30, Friday 12th March and Wednesday 17th March.**

I enclose an instructional leaflet with some more information. If students are happy to be tested, they should complete and return a consent form which they will receive as they arrive at school on Monday.

Those taking the test will be supervised by trained staff. The 'lateral flow' tests are quick and easy using a swab of your nose and throat. Results (which take around half an hour from testing) will be shared directly with staff and pupils participating.

We are informed that validation studies conducted by Oxford University and Public Health England, LFD tests were shown to be as accurate in identifying a case as a PCR test (99.68% specificity, i.e. a low rate of "false positives"). However, the tests have lower sensitivity (so give more "false negatives"). LFD tests are more effective when a person has higher viral load, hence the need to test frequently. As a school we agree that using these tests is a valid part of a combination of strategies to manage risk.





## Self-Testing at Home

After students have undertaken three tests in a supervised setting, and have had the chance to familiarise themselves with self-swabbing, we will then be able to transition to home-testing. Students will be able to collect test kits from the school reception for regular twice weekly testing at home. You will receive a step-by-step guide with the home testing kit. More information can also be found [here](#).

The results of students twice-weekly home testing will need to be registered with us after each test using [this](#) form. You will also need to report the results to the NHS online at <https://www.gov.uk/report-covid19-result> or by telephone by calling 119.

From 1 March 2021, if you're a member of a household, childcare bubble or support bubble of staff or a pupil you can get a twice-weekly test in the following ways.

### Get a test through your employer

Your workplace may offer rapid lateral flow testing to you. Contact your employer to find out more.

### Take a test at a rapid lateral flow test site

You can take a rapid lateral flow test at a local site. Testing at these sites is assisted, which means you will swab yourself under the supervision of a trained operator.

You may need to book an appointment.

[Find your nearest rapid lateral flow test site.](#)

### Collect test kits

You can collect 2 packs of home test kits at a local collection point. Each pack contains 7 tests.

Anyone 18 or over can collect. You can check online if the location is busy before you go.

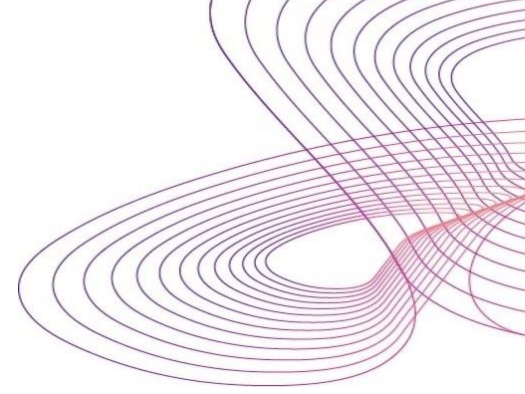
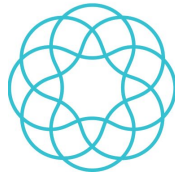
[Find your nearest home test kit collection point.](#)

### Order home test kits online

If you cannot get tested at your workplace, or are unable to go to a test site or collect test kits, you can order a home test kit online. Do not order online if you can get a test through other methods. This frees up home delivery for those who need it most.

[Order rapid lateral flow home test kits](#)





## What happens if the test is positive?

**Self-testing at home:** Pupils will need to take a further 'PCR test' (similar to those done in local and regional testing sites) on the same day (or as soon as possible) if the result of the self-test at home is positive. We will be able to provide these PCR test kits to perform at home or you can go to [www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test](http://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test) or call 119 to book a follow-up test. If ordering a PCR test yourselves, they should choose to visit a drive-through test site if possible, as it is faster than requesting a home test.

During this time while they wait for the PCR result (via text / email) they will need to self-isolate.

If the PCR test returns a positive result you will have to self-isolate and follow the guidance from NHS Test and Trace.

**On-site testing:** Participating staff and pupils who test positive will be informed about their results individually. Guidance on safe travel and additional precautions will be provided along with test results. They will have to self-isolate and follow the guidance from NHS Test and Trace. There is no need for a PCR test to confirm the result.

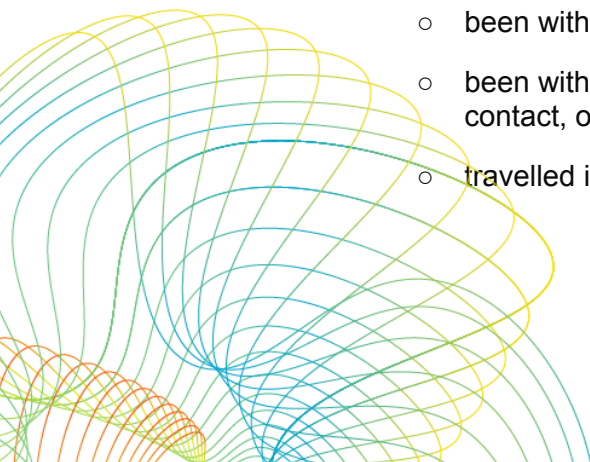
## What happens if the test is negative?

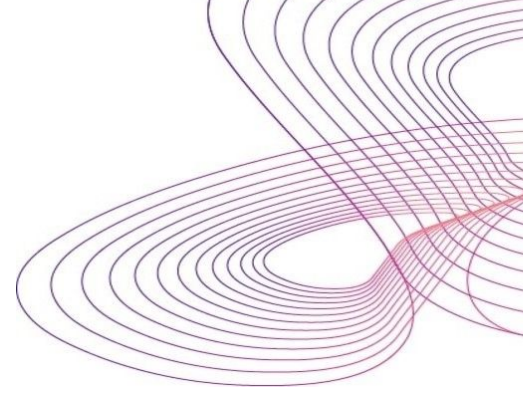
They will be able to stay in school and resume their activities as normal. A small number of pupils may need to repeat the test if the first test was invalid or void for some reason.

## What if staff or students have been in close contact with someone in school who tests positive?

The staff member or student will be notified that they are a close contact by the school and will need to self-isolate for 10 days in line with Government guidance. Close contacts are identified as the following which would be possible in school:

- Anyone who lives in the same household as another person who has COVID-19 symptoms or has tested positive for COVID-19
- anyone who has had any of the following types of contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19:
  - face-to-face contact including being coughed on or having a face-to-face conversation within one metre
  - been within one metre for one minute or longer without face-to-face contact
  - been within 2 metres of someone for more than 15 minutes (either as a one-off contact, or added up together over one day)
  - travelled in the same vehicle





We have procedures in place to limit the chances of being a close contact in the case of a positive result and us being asked by test and trace to identify close contacts.

### **What if my child develops symptoms?**

This testing programme at school is for people with no symptoms. If your child develops symptoms at any time (such as a high temperature; a new, continuous cough; or a loss or change to their sense of smell or taste) they must immediately self-isolate, and book a test by calling 119 (England, Wales and Northern Ireland) or 0300 303 2713 (Scotland) or visiting <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>.

Students should also self isolate if someone at home has symptoms or a positive test result.

We will support our staff and pupils throughout, but please contact Dave or Ellie if you have any questions.

Yours faithfully,

Damian Haigh

Headteacher

