



Spalding High School

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Headmistress Mrs M Anderson B.Ed

26th February 2021

Dear Year 9 students and parents/carers,

I trust this letter finds you and your family well. This letter contains very important information. Please read it carefully and keep it somewhere safe.

The arrangements for the phased return are well underway and we can now confirm the following arrangements for testing and return to school:

Year 9 MUST attend school on THURSDAY 11th MARCH.

Students are not to attend school if they have **any** of the symptoms of Covid-19, no matter how mild. Parents must organise a PCR test via NHS Test and Trace if their child has any of the symptoms of Covid-19 and follow the Government advice found here:

[Stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-or-confirmed-coronavirus-covid-19-infection)

Parents should contact the School and inform us that their child will not be attending on Thursday 11th March as they are too unwell to do so.

The three main symptoms of Covid-19 are:

- A fever.
- A new continuous cough.
- Loss of smell/taste.

Will the key worker/vulnerable student provision continue from Monday 8th?

Yes. Students who have been accessing a place in school during lockdown will be able to continue to attend and will be tested on Monday 8th. The room will remain operational until the last year group (Y9) return. Students currently using this provision will re-join their year group as their cohort return. From Monday 8th March parents are no longer permitted to bring their cars onto the school site for drop off/collection.

In order to maintain enhanced protective measures and effective social distancing whilst the Year 9 Bubble is being tested on Thursday 11th March, student arrival times will be staggered. Students must complete their Lateral Flow test before resuming face-to-face lessons in their bubbles.

What time should I arrive?

There are two sets of arrival instructions – see details below and follow the instructions and timings:

Students who use Local Authority Designated transport or private school buses/taxis must arrive at their normal time between **8.30am and 8.55am**. The arrival of this group of students is **not** influenced by their form group. The government and local authority advice regarding the use of school transport still strongly advises students and parents to find alternative means of transport at this time and not to use the designated transport if at all possible. Please continue to transport your children to school using the

same means as you did for Terms 1 and 2. We will continue to post service updates from the local authority on the school website.

All other students must arrive at the following times:

- Students in **9C and 9J arrive between 9.30am and 9.45am**
- Students in **9N and 9P arrive between 10am and 10.15am**
- Students in **9S arrive between 10.30am – 10.45am**

Where should I go?

All students must arrive as normal, through the front green pedestrian gates. You will be met by staff and welcomed back. As always, you will need to be wearing a face mask and use hand sanitiser upon arrival. We will direct you to the pre-test holding area, which will either be in the sports hall or the school hall.

On your journey into school please try to stay more than 2m away from other students.

Why do we have to go to a “holding area”? Why can’t we go straight to the Year 9 Bubble?

The Government have given schools very specific instructions about how to induct students back into school. Students are not allowed to return to face-to-face learning until they have received a negative Lateral Flow Device (LFD) Test result.

What will happen in the holding area?

We have staggered your arrival time to make it easier to maintain social distancing and also to reduce the time you will have to wait in the holding area. Both the sports hall and the school hall have been set up with desks more than 2m apart. When you arrive, you will be directed to a desk and be able to get on with private study, read a book or chat with friends. You will need to remain facing forward but will be able to chat to those in the rows alongside you. If it is a nice morning and the grass on the field is dry, we will use the school field as the holding area instead. The Senior Team, Pastoral Team and other staff will be around to chat to you and catch up. You should not be in the holding area for too long before we take you to the testing room.

What will happen in the testing room?

The Covid Test Room is Room 23 (the food room on the Maths corridor). Mrs Pryke is our Covid Test Team Leader supported by staff such as Mrs Jarvis, Mrs Smith, Mrs Handley and parent volunteers. You will be well looked after and they will explain everything that you have to do. There is a one-way system through the room where you enter via the link corridor and leave via the fire door by the field.

What is the test like?

Not as bad as you might imagine and you get used to it very quickly! Mrs Pryke and Mrs Jarvis are preparing a short video to show you what happens. As soon as it is ready we will send it home for you to watch. In the meantime, here is a short explanation:

You will sanitise as you enter the room and be directed to a desk where there is a mirror and the test kit. There is a simple “how to card” and the staff will explain it too. You will use a swab (like a cotton bud with a longer stick) and gently touch your tonsils on both sides. It might make you gag a little but it really is not that bad. When you have done your tonsils you have to put the same swab up one of your nostrils (again – nowhere near as bad as it sounds!) Then you put the swab in a little vial of solution, move it about a bit and then take your kit to the processing table and you are done!

Don’t worry. It really is fine. You will be in the test room for less than 5 minutes and any discomfort you might feel will last no longer than a few seconds.

What happens after the test?

You will return to the holding area and sit in the same desk. No-one else will have sat at that place whilst you have been gone. It will take about 30 minutes for the results to come through. Parents of students under 16 will receive their results on their phones from NHS Test and Trace, but as we have the results in

school, we do not need to wait for them to come through to your parent's phone. Please ask your parents to have their phones on, so we can contact them if we need to.

As soon as you have your negative result, we will take you over to your year group bubble.

When do I start lessons?

As soon as you are allowed back into your bubble you will go to the room you would normally have your lesson in. Your teacher will be there waiting for you but because we are staggering the start of the day and the testing of the year group, you will not necessarily have all your classmates with you straight away. Our testing capacity and logistical arrangements are fantastic but it will still take us about 2 ½–3 hours to test an entire year group.

Your teacher will use this time as an opportunity to find out how you have got on with the lockdown work and answer any questions you may have. They will also have some consolidation tasks they may ask you to do.

We would expect students to be joining their classes throughout Period 1 and 2 and during Period 3, all students will have been tested. You should find that Period 3, and definitely Periods 4 and 5 will be normal face-to-face lessons.

What happens at breaktime?

Students who have been tested and are already back in their bubble, will be able to have break as normal. Those students who are still in the holding area waiting for their test or result, are not allowed to leave – so bring food and drink with you just in case!

What happens at lunchtime?

The Year 9 testing will be finished by lunchtime. You will be allowed to have lunch as normal. The canteen is open and we will follow the normal staggered times to use it.

What do I need to wear?

Normal school uniform. We are aware that some of you may have outgrown items of uniform and that our new supplier is not yet up and running. You need to email (or ask a parent to contact) your Head of Year and explain the items you will not have. They will advise what should be worn instead and give you a note to excuse you from not wearing the full uniform. You may wear summer or winter uniform – whichever you have and best fits you.

What do I need to bring?

What you would normally bring. It is a Week 2 timetable. You also need to bring food and drink in case you are still in the holding area during breaktime and some private study work or a book for while you are waiting to join lessons.

Will I receive homework on my return to school?

Yes. The homework timetable will resume as detailed on the School website.

Can I use the locker that was allocated to me in Term 2?

Yes. We will resume the shared locker system for coats and PE kits. As before, the lockers will not be locked and so must not be used for valuables or books. Students are reminded to only bring with them what they need for each day as it is essential that we keep surfaces clear and easy to clean. Furthermore, you will also need the majority of your folders and books at home just in case you have to self-isolate.

What is happening about PE/Games?

All students in Years 7 – 11 will return to two hours of PE/Games per week and change into their PE kits at school. The routines for changing were established in Term 2 and the risk assessment is on the School website.

What happens if my test is inconclusive?

The test team will let you know and then try to re-test your original swab to get a result. If they can't, you might need to take the test again.

What happens if my test is positive?

Hopefully it won't be, but if it is, we will organise for you to be collected and you will need to go home and self-isolate for 10 days. You will also need to let us know of any school based close contacts you have had and they will need to self-isolate too.

The government recently announced that you do not need to organise a PCR test if your LFD test is positive, but you might decide you want to organise one anyway.

I haven't registered for my test yet. What should I do?

Follow the hyperlinks in the letter sent home to parents and via student school email accounts on Tuesday 23rd February. It is also available on the school website.

I do not give my permission to be tested. What happens now?

Asymptomatic testing is vitally important in the fight to control this virus, especially the new, more transmissible variants. Please re-consider your decision and participate in the self-test. We know that you might not want to do the test (for a variety of reasons) but please think seriously about those around you who will be affected if you are an asymptomatic carrier and pass the virus on.

Testing is voluntary. No one can force you to take the test. The government have made it clear that you may restart your lessons and if you decide not to be tested, we would ask that you arrive in school for 11.35am on Thursday 11th March and go to reception where you will be met and taken to your lesson.

Please think seriously about those you may be putting at risk by your decision.

I feel unwell (not Covid related) on Thursday 11th March and cannot attend school. What should I do?

Have your parent contact the school and report the absence as normal. We will organise for you to have your test as soon as you return. You are not to attend your year group bubble but must report to reception on your first morning back so that we can meet you and organise the test. Please ask your parent/carer to contact school the day before you are planning to return so that we know to expect you and we can organise everything ahead of your return.

What do I do on Friday morning?

Arrive as normal, go straight to the Year 9 bubble and get on with school as we did in Terms 1 and 2. There will be a health and safety briefing in tutor time and then back into lessons and learning.

What am I meant to do on Monday 8th, Tuesday 9th and Wednesday 10th when my year group are not in school?

There will be normal remote learning lessons for Year 9 on Monday 8th March and Tuesday 9th March. On Wednesday 10th March, we are allocating an organisation and catch up day. There will be no Teams lessons or work set that day. Organise your uniform, bag, books and folders and finish off any work that you still need to complete.

When will we be tested again?

Year 9 are due to have their second in-school test on Tuesday 16th March. This will be organised very differently to the return to school test. We will publish a rota and collect students from lessons for a few minutes to conduct the test during the day. You will not have to wait in holding areas. We will do the same for the third in-school test.

Why do we have to do three in-school tests first?

The government want you to be shown how to do the tests properly so that you have practised what you need to do before you use the LFD home testing kits.

What will happen with the home testing kits and results?

We will explain this in more detail nearer the time.

I would rather do the tests in school. Can I?

Yes. There will be lots of students who prefer to do them at school and we are expecting to run the test room for as long as is needed.

How long will the government want us to complete the twice weekly tests?

At the moment, they have told schools that this will continue until at least after Easter and probably for a while after that. It depends upon the infection and transmission rates and any new variants.

Do I now have to wear a mask in lessons?

Yes. The government have said that due to the new variants, students should wear masks in lessons where they are sitting within 2m of each other (which you are) as well as in communal areas and on transport. This measure is in place for at least the whole of Term 4 and will be reviewed by the government at Easter. They have explained that we cannot wear visors or shields. It must be a mask.

Students with medical exemption should already have seen their Head of Year during Term 2. Please make contact asap if you have not spoken to your Head of Year and you have medical exemption.

I trust this letter explains all of our arrangements fully. Please contact the school at enquiries@spaldinghigh.lincs.sch.uk if you have further questions. We will continue to keep students and parents informed as developments occur.

Yours sincerely



M K Anderson
Headmistress