



23 February 2021

Dear Parents/Carers

I am sure many of you will have watched the Prime Minister's address last night or since heard updates via the media. We are extremely pleased to have it confirmed that schools can reopen to students from Monday 8 March.

However, I think it is important to stress that this will not mean that all students will be back at school and in lessons on that date. Students can only return to school and mix with other students once they have had a negative lateral flow test. The Department for Education have now released this [updated guidance](#) for schools.

Key things to note are;

- Secondary Schools will need a staggered return to school (prioritising Years 10 - 13) to allow for mass testing in the week beginning Monday 8 March.
- Secondary students will be offered four lateral flow tests over the next few weeks (three on the school site and one at home) as they return to learning in the classroom. Testing is not compulsory but is strongly advised.
- Following this round of mass testing, secondary staff and students can continue to test themselves using lateral flow tests twice a week at home.
- After one negative test result students can return to school – along with students in the same year group who chose not to be tested.
- Remote learning and in-school provision for children of critical workers will both continue until the student's year group returns to lessons in school.
- Face coverings are to be worn by students in classrooms until Easter. This is in addition to corridors and shared communal spaces as was in place before Christmas. This will not apply to those who are medically exempt or in situations where wearing a face covering would impact on the ability to take part in exercise or strenuous activity, for example in PE lessons.

We are now working very hard to plan and consider the logistics of this announcement and how this will work here at Backwell School. We are a large secondary school with over 1700 students and nearly 200 staff which means we need to be able to carry out at least 2,000 tests a week in order to follow the government guidelines. We also need to review all aspects of the way school operates in the light of the latest government advice: I can reassure you that continue to have a very robust Risk Assessment in place and school remains a very safe place for our young people and staff.

We very much look forward to welcoming the students back to school - I promise to update you all as soon as we can confirm our arrangements.

It is important to note that the announcement did not cover the outcome of the Ofqual consultation and the awarding of exam grades this summer which affects Years 11, 12 and 13. We are expecting more information on these plans towards the end of this week.

Thank you so much for your ongoing patience and understanding.

Mr J Nunes
Headteacher