Dear Parent/Carer,

**Re: Return to school for all students from the 8th March 2021**

Firstly, I would like to thank you for your continued support with your child’s online learning and the warm messages many of you have sent to school during this further national lockdown.

 I am sure that you are aware of the prime minister’s announcement at the start of last week regarding all schools re-opening from Monday 8th March 2021. We know that this will have been welcome news to many of you and we are very much looking forward to welcoming everyone back to school.

This letter contains important and detailed information for you, students and staff so that we can work together to support a safe and effective return to full-time education. The leadership team have been working hard behind the scenes and have thought very carefully about how we return all students to Tiverton High School as safely and as quickly as possible.

You will be aware that secondary schools are now required to carry out lateral flow testing (LFD) for students during the first couple of weeks of their return to school. There are to be 3 tests completed in school, in an attempt to detect cases of Covid-19 in staff and students who do not have symptoms, and therefore reduce the spread of the virus in the community. The vast majority of parents have already given consent for their child to be tested and if you would like to consent (or not) for your son or daughter to take part int his programme, please click on this [link](https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=ShlJCOY1wEyZgcdVTSk13pv8z--zfExCtKAURicTY1NUNFNONjcwV1pWR081UjNHS1ZXTzlZVURHRS4u&wdLOR=c56802727-983C-8F41-8070-35E3EB896CB3). Through regular testing we will help to reduce the spread in school through asymptomatic transmission. I am therefore encouraging as many students as possible to take part in the testing. Our team of testers have all completed approved training and are experienced in the delivery of these tests, however we appreciate that many students will be nervous the first time and our team will work with you and your child to put them at ease. **We will not test any children for whom we do not have consent.**

**Planned phased return from Monday 8th March 2021**

In order to support a careful and purposeful return to school we have made a decision to re-open the school in phases. This will not only support the mass testing programme, but our staff and students who have had a two-month absence from face-to-face teaching and need to re-familiarise themselves with the everyday routines on the school site.

On **Monday 8th March** we will start the mass testing of students. In order to conduct mass testing in a safe and controlled manner we have planned for all students whose parents have provided consent to take their first test the **day before** they officially return to school. We have taken considerable time planning and preparing for this process as we feel it is necessary to have the health and safety of everyone at the heart of our decision making.

**Children of key workers and those considered vulnerable will still be able to book a school place for the 8th March.**

**Monday 8th March**

**Lateral Flow testing only**

**Year 11** will be invited to come in to school for their first test in the **morning** at a designated time. Students must arrive at the time stated in this letter as this will help support the smooth running of the testing process. Once the test has been completed year 11 students should return home and complete the independent work set for them in English, Maths and Science.

[student name] is invited for his/her lateral flow test on [day] [date] between [time1] and [time2].

**Year 10** will be invited to come into school for their first test in the **afternoon** at a designated time. Students must arrive at the time stated in this letter as this will help support the smooth running of the testing process. Year 10 students should complete the independent work set for them in English, Maths and Science in the morning, prior to them coming in to school for their test.

**Tuesday 9th March**

**Year groups in school**

**Year 11** will be welcomed back to school for a **prompt 9.00am start.** They should be in full school uniform and go to their tutor bases.

**Year 10** will be welcomed back to school after break for a **prompt start at 11.20am**

**Testing**

**Year 9** will be invited to come in to school for their first test in the **morning** at a designated time. Students must arrive at the time stated in this letter as this will help support the smooth running of the testing process. Once the test has been completed year 9 students should return home and complete the independent work set for them in English, Maths and Science.

**Year 7** will be invited to come in to school for their first test in the **afternoon** at a designated time. Students must arrive at the time stated in this letter as this will help support the smooth running of the testing process. Year 7 students should complete the independent work set for them in English, Maths and Science in the morning, prior to them coming in to school for their test.

**Wednesday 10th March**

**Year groups in school**

**Year 11, 10 and 9** come in for a **prompt start at 9.00am.** They should be in full school uniform and go to their tutor bases.

**Year 7** will be welcomed back to school after break for a **prompt start at 11.20am**

**Testing**

**Year 8** will be invited to come in to school for their first test in the **morning** at a designated time. Students must arrive at the time stated in this letter as this will help support the smooth running of the testing process. Once the test has been completed year 8 students should return home and complete the independent work set for them in English, Maths and Science.

**Thursday 11th March**

**All year groups in for a prompt start at 9.00am. They should be in full school uniform and go to their tutor bases.**

**Really important information for parents/carers and students to digest;**

* **Students can only visit the school site for their test and must leave as soon as it has been completed. They must not wait around for other students in their year group.**
* **All students arriving on site must wear a face covering (unless exempt).**
* **We anticipate approximately 45 minutes  for the registration process and testing.**
* **Students must not attend their testing appointment if they have Covid-19 symptoms.**
* **Parents are welcome to drop off their child and wait in the school car park but must not enter school premises.**
* **Please remind your child to follow instructions from members of staff who are facilitating the testing and ensure that they comply with all rules regarding hygiene, face coverings, hand sanitising and social distancing.**
* **We understand that students may well be nervous about self-administering this test in the first instance. Our staff have been trained to support and will do so with care and kindness.**
* **School transport will commence across Devon from the 8th March but it is the parents’ responsibility to get their child in to and home from school on the day of their first test. Please contact the school if you envisage a problem with this.**
* **Students should bring their smart phone with them on the day of their first test for registration purposes. If a student doesn’t have a phone or it is broken there will be staff on hand to assist them with the registration process. Students will receive the results of their test via their smartphone.**
* **Students must return to school in full uniform. Please ask your son/daughter to check this week that their uniform still fits them. The shop in Student Services is open every day this week if you need to purchase any items. Thank you in advance parents/carers for supporting us with this. (If you have any concerns about uniform please contact your child’s student support worker as per the previous email from Mrs Lane).**
* **Please remember that unless students are exempt from wearing face masks all staff and students working in secondary schools are now expected to wear one at all times unless outside. This includes in classrooms which is a new expectation added to the guidance for returning to school from the 8th March. If you have not already done so previously, please inform the school of any reason why your child may be exempt from wearing a mask so that they may be issued with an exemption card.**
* **Social distancing measures will still be in place as students return fully to school from 8th March. This will include staggered breaks, lunchtimes and the end of the day**
* **The school will revert to a one-way system in the main building, and it will be important that students re-familiarise themselves with the route on their first day back.**
* **Staff and students will be expected to wash their hands or use the hand sanitizer provided more frequently than usual.**
* **Staff will continue to spray tables and chairs at the end of each lessons and as students enter the room, they will continue to be asked to wipe them prior to sitting down.**
* **Students will remain in their year group bubble and are expected to keep away from other year group bubbles where possible. This includes when they travel on school transport, and as they walk to and from school.**

I appreciate that there is lots of detail in this letter but I wanted to make sure that you received as much information as possible. In the meantime we will continue to communicate with all students and parents/carers over the coming days if there are any further developments at a government or local level.

I do want to assure you that we will proceed with great care and caution over the coming weeks. Our students and many of you, have found the last few months extremely difficult, and returning to some sort of normality is becoming more essential as each day passes. We have valued all of your support over the past twelve months as we have navigated our way through the difficulties posed by the pandemic. We will continue to support you and your child as we return to something closer to ‘normal’.

Yours sincerely

Sammy Crook

Head