

Friday 26th February 2021

Dear Parents and carers,

Thank you for your understanding and patience in waiting for final details of our intentions regarding the return to school for all our students following the announcement on Monday. I know parents and students have been waiting eagerly for news of their return and it is with great pleasure that I write today to clarify our plans to welcome all our students back into school.

As I mentioned in the letter I sent out earlier in the week, this week I have attended a DfE webinar and the weekly Cheshire East Headteachers meeting to ensure the plans we put in place are as effective as they can possibly be. There has been a lot of collaboration and idea sharing which has been helpful, but ultimately all headteachers must make the decision that is right for their school, their context and their community. As such, you may see other secondary schools do things differently, starting at different points and planning their testing with a different schedule. I can assure you that our plan is bespoke to Malbank and is the best route forward for getting *our* students back into learning as soon as possible, but also safely and maintaining the key role we all play in keeping the wider local community and our families safe.

When I wrote earlier this week, I implied that we would have to return in a staggered manner over the course of the week beginning the 8th, this was because the government at that point had stated that students could only be on site from the Monday of that week. Since then, they have changed their approach and we now have flexibility to test pupils next week to allow the all-important first test to be completed which allows them to return to lessons. Because of this change of stance, we will now no longer require a staggered return as we are requesting that students come for a test on either Thursday the 4th or Friday the 5th of March.

It is vital that students attend their slot (which has been arranged in form group slots so students can have opportunity to meet their tutor again or via surname in the sixth form) for them to be able to attend from period one on Monday the 8th. **Please see details of the testing schedule and additional key information on the final page of this letter.** Where students who have given consent do not attend their allocated test slot next week, we will have to keep them in isolation upon return on Monday until they can be tested. We cannot estimate how long this may take and must point out that due to restrictions on where students will be housed, they will not be able to access lessons until they have had their test and waited 30 minutes for the result. This is because of the clear government guidance that those consenting to a test cannot re-enter lessons until they have a negative lateral flow test result. As I want to see all students back in classrooms on Monday at 8.45am, I ask you as parents to do all you can to help us achieve that by bringing students in for their test slot next week. If your child attends key worker provision in school on their test day, they should attend school as usual, and we will arrange for them to join their form at the correct time. As I promised earlier, I will send out a video at the start of next week featuring a walk through of our test site where I will explain each step to the students to help them to envisage what Thursday and Friday will be like.

Upon return to school on the 8th, students will have two further tests in school and will complete their 'in school' testing programme by the end of Monday March the 15th. At this point students will be given home testing kits which they will be required to conduct twice weekly at home. More details about how this will work will follow in the coming weeks.

Due to the sporadic nature of student test times and the significant impact the two test days will have on staffing to enable us to test 1,100 students, **there will be no live lessons on Thursday the 4th and Friday the 5th of March**. Students will still be set work as usual via Teams, however it will be in the form of clearly explained tasks and materials or a pre-recorded video lesson.

Thank you so much to all the parents and carers who have returned the electronic form regarding consent for tests, it is genuinely very much appreciated. By agreeing to the tests, you and your child are playing your part in keeping themselves, other students, staff and people we return home to as safe as possible. If you have not filled in the form yet (including if you wish to **not** give consent) please follow the link below and if possible, get the information back to us today by 3pm. (Please also note that for families with multiple students at Malbank, a form must be filled in for each individual child.)

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=FqNhYSvmnUOhS5YcTlJfSDAONHB8X1Fq4sMDtcATqFUREY1V05ZVUVXV0FGOTRCSFo4SjJQVVI5My4u>

Another change to the guidance that has been confirmed in the last three days is regarding students who have had COVID-19 in the last 90 days. The current stance is that anyone who has tested positive for COVID-19 does not need to have another test for 90 days. Therefore, students who have had COVID in the last three months do not need to take part in the testing process. If you have given consent for testing, but in light of this change will no longer require your child to be tested, please contact the relevant Key stage team with dates to show when the student tested positive by emailing ks3@malbank.cheshire.sch.uk, ks4@malbank.cheshire.sch.uk or ks5@malbank.cheshire.sch.uk

As I explained earlier in the week, when attending for tests, students need to remember to sanitise, socially distance and wear masks around the site. As a reminder, from March 8th until Easter when it will be reviewed by the government, all students (except those who are medically exempt) will be required to wear masks at all times when indoors on site including during lessons. For further details on this please see the open letter from the Minister for Education by clicking the following link:

<https://dfemedia.blog.gov.uk/2021/02/23/an-open-letter-from-education-secretary-gavin-williamson-to-parents-carers-and-guardians/>

I am genuinely delighted to welcome you all back in the coming weeks and am very much looking forward to meeting students when they return for tests next Thursday and Friday. Lockdown has been a tough time for all of us, yet we can now see some light at the end of the tunnel. I know how happy it made me to tell my children they would be returning to school on the 8th and how excited they are to return to face-to-face learning and to see their friends and teachers again. I hope your child feels the same and that the 8th of March marks

the start of a return to normality for all of us and most importantly, the chance for our young people to experience what it is to be a child at school once more.

Yours,
John Harrison
Headteacher

Testing plans for Thursday 4th and Friday 5th March 2021

- All pupils who have given consent must arrive at school at their allocated **arrival** time by entering at the back gate next to the rear school car park.
- Any student arriving at the incorrect time or without having given prior consent will not be allowed to test.
- Students should proceed to the main hall where they will be met by their form tutor (in years 7-11) and taken over for their allocated form test slot. (Sixth Form students are grouped in alphabetical surname order.)
- Students will then wait to be tested and will leave the sports hall immediately after they have completed their test. Students must then leave site straight away.
- Estimated time from arrival to departure should be a maximum of 25 minutes. Parents should make arrangements with pupils to collect them from the back car park or for students to make their own way home on foot or by using public transport where necessary.
- Test results will come via email and or text through the NHS portal when they have been uploaded by our admin team.

THURSDAY 4th March																				
TEST TIME	9.00 am	9.15 am	9.30 am	9.45 am	10.00 am	10.15 am	10.00 am	10.45 am	11.20 am	11.35 am	11.50 am	12.05 pm	12.20 pm	12.35 pm	12.50 pm	1.05 pm	2.00 pm	2.15 pm	2.30 pm	2.45 pm
ARRIVE AT	8.50 am	9.05 am	9.20 am	9.35 am	9.50 am	10.05 am	10.20 am	10.35 am	11.10 am	11.25 am	11.40 am	11.55 am	12.10 pm	12.25 pm	12.40 pm	12.55 pm	1.50 pm	2.05pm	2.20 pm	2.35 pm
FORM	7 GGS	7 JAS	7 MJS	8 AML	8 APK	8 GGG	8 HFS	9 GXG	9 GXS	9 JMH	10 ADW	10 AZB	10 CZS	11 CHK	11 OYR	11 JYC	11 MEM	12 A-F	12 G-M	13 A-C
FRIDAY 5th March																				
TEST TIME	9.00 am	9.15 am	9.30 am	9.45 am	10.00 am	10.15 am	10.30 am	10.45 am	11.20 am	11.35 am	11.50 am	12.05 am	12.20 am	12.35 am	12.50 am	1.05 pm	2.00 pm	2.15 pm	2.30 pm	2.45 pm
ARRIVE AT	8.50 am	9.05 am	9.20 am	9.35 am	9.50 am	10.05 am	10.20 am	10.35 am	11.10 am	11.25 am	11.40 am	11.55 am	12.10 pm	12.25 pm	12.40 pm	12.55 pm	1.50 pm	2.05 pm	2.20 pm	2.35 pm
FORM	13 D-M	13 N-W	12 N-W	11 MLW	11 NJJ	11 PPS	10 DLW	10 RAC	10 RXW	10 SBC	9 KAT	9 MXA	9 SJC	9 SJT	8 KDP	8 KXS	8 LAB	7 SXG	7 TXC	7 VCN

If you have any queries about the testing process please contact the relevant key stage on:

ks3@malbank.cheshire.sch.uk, ks4@malbank.cheshire.sch.uk or ks5@malbank.cheshire.sch.uk.