



1 March 2021

Dear Parent/ Carer

As you know, all children will soon be able to return to face-to-face teaching. We understand that your child may have mixed feelings when thinking about the return to school following the national lockdown. We are here to support your child back into the school routine and we are looking forward to welcoming all of our pupils back to HMS. This letter and the appendix contain a lot of information, but I feel it is important to update you fully. The HMS team are determined to make the return to school a safe and happy one for all of our children. If you have any questions after reading the information, please get in touch.

You will have heard the term 'catch up' in the media. This is not something we will be discussing with the children on their return. This situation has been out of their control and they have worked exceptionally hard to continue their learning remotely. Instead, we will be emphasising the importance of preparedness for learning including skills such as organisation and maintaining positive mental and physical health. Our staff are working hard to ensure that we are prioritising fundamental learning and personalising our approach to prepare the children for their next steps - the curriculum will be modified accordingly. Our focus will remain on ensuring high levels of achievement whilst maintaining excellent pastoral support and reducing the pressure or feeling of 'catch up'. Mr Barry and Mr Stephenson have prepared a Q&A video for children based on questions gathered by form tutors which will be shared this week.

Arrangements for return in March

Friday 5 March

- Any children who have attended in-school bubbles this half term should attend as normal. KS3 children attending the bubbles will be tested with their form classes.
- Remote learning will be available for all pupils in Google Classrooms but there will be no live lessons today.
- Year 7 and 8 pupils will be invited to attend a slot for COVID testing (see testing timetable). They are asked to arrive on time and then return home immediately after their test. Parents/ carers are asked to ensure their prompt arrival and safe return home. They should report to the Year 6 yard (Fellside building) where a member of staff will meet them to explain the process. Please contact us with any concerns about the time slots.

| Testing Timetable Friday 5 March | |
|-------------------------------------|-------|
| 7CAR | 8.45 |
| 7CCA | 9.15 |
| 7IBO | 9.45 |
| 7AMG | 10.15 |
| 8JKW | 10.45 |
| 8IHO | 11.30 |
| 8EST | 12.00 |
| 8PGA | 1.00 |
| 8SLA | 1.30 |

Monday 8 March

- All pupils to return to school as normal (**KS3 at 8.40am and KS2 at 8.50am**).
- Year 7 and 8 pupils will receive their second in-school COVID test – they should attend as normal at 8.40am as testing will happen throughout the day.

Thursday 11 March

- Year 7 and 8 pupils will receive their third (and final) in-school COVID test
- They should attend school as normal at 8.40am – testing will happen throughout the day

To support the transition back to school life, there will be an extra focus on pastoral/ form class time throughout the first week. This will allow children time to familiarise themselves with school routines and to settle back into school life with their peers.

Lateral flow testing

Mr Atkins sent home further information about the approach to asymptomatic testing last week. If you haven't yet been able to complete the [consent form](#), please try to return it as soon as you can. Children in years 7 and 8 will have three in-school lateral flow tests over the first 10 days back in school. Following these tests, pupils will be issued with two tests a week which they are asked to complete at home. We will send further guidance on home testing and reporting results once the children are back in school. Testing is voluntary but we are strongly advising pupils take part to reduce the risk of community transmission.

During form time this week, tutors will discuss the return to school and the testing process including showing a [tutorial video](#) and sharing information on how the lateral flow tests are self-administered. We understand that some children will be feeling unsure about the testing so please let us know if your child would like further reassurance. They will be guided by school staff/ volunteers in the test site and will be made to feel safe and equipped to test at home over the coming weeks.

If you think you or your child will struggle to administer the tests at home or you find that your child is not able to do so once they have tried, please get in touch with us and we can make alternative arrangements and offer further support. If your child is feeling worried about the school tests, please also let us know.

Face coverings

For pupils in year 7 and 8, guidance states that face coverings should now be worn in classrooms, during activities where distancing cannot be maintained and when moving around the premises such as in corridors and communal areas. They do not need to be worn when outdoors or during PE lessons (but should be worn when changing).

We will give the children reminders on the safe wearing and storage of face coverings when they return. Form tutors will have spare disposable masks available each day but we would really appreciate you sending your child in with a suitable face covering and a sealable plastic bag to store it in. Reusable face coverings should be washed regularly and should not be worn if soiled or damp.

There are some exemptions for those children who:

- Cannot put on, wear or remove a face covering because of a physical impairment or disability, illness or mental health condition.
- Rely on lip reading, clear sound or facial expression to communicate.

We will identify children who the exemption criteria apply to in advance. Please get in touch with us before 8 March if you wish to discuss the wearing of face coverings, otherwise the expectation will be that all KS3 pupils are wearing them in school. Children in KS2 do not need to wear face coverings but can choose to if they wish. We understand that some pupils may be feeling worried about wearing face coverings throughout the day so we will discuss this on our return.

Pupil support

We have a comprehensive approach to pupil support which will focus on establishing learning routines and supporting positive mental health and wellbeing. We will also target additional literacy, mathematics and science support where it is most needed. We fully understand our children as individuals and believe we can target support to make the return to school a very positive experience. Assessment has been - and will continue to be - ongoing through low-stakes, formative teacher assessment. Summative assessments (tests) will not take place until later in the year. If you feel that your child would benefit from more academic or pastoral support, please contact us at any time.

School attendance

We have identified pupils who we feel may be particularly anxious about the return to school and will contact you over the next week to discuss support. We are more than happy to accommodate visits to school to ensure that the return does not cause any undue stress or worry. Please let us know if you think this would benefit your child.

In the guidance, the section on **attendance** makes clear that all pupils are expected to be in school, with the possible exception of individuals still unable to attend in line with public health advice because they are self-isolating and have had symptoms or a positive test result themselves, or because they are a close contact of someone who has coronavirus. If this applies to your child, please inform us as soon as possible. Details of the NHS test and trace service can be found [here](#). We know that children are gradually being removed from the shielding patient list (SPL) but some children may still need to shield due to being clinically extremely vulnerable and should continue to learn remotely.

I will write to you separately regarding our plans for the curriculum and approach to remote learning for those not able to attend school due to COVID-related absence. I am sorry for the information overload but I hope you feel reassured that the return to school life will be a safe and happy one for all of our pupils. More operational detail can be found in the appendix. We are here to support them (and you) as always, so please get in touch with any questions or concerns. We are looking forward to seeing the children back in school very soon.

Yours faithfully

Mr Watters
Deputy Headteacher

Appendix: Additional Information

Safety measures

The regular and thorough **cleaning of hands** remains of critical importance in preventing the spread of the virus. All pupils will be required to clean their hands regularly (with soap and running water or hand sanitiser). We have additional hand-washing facilities at key entry points to the school buildings, with hand sanitiser located at key points including in all classrooms. Notwithstanding this, we encourage parents to provide their children with hand gel that can be applied straightforwardly as and when required. Pupils will be encouraged to wash their hands as soon as they arrive on site, using designated year group facilities (including the additional hand washing stations) and they will be directed to sanitise their hands immediately on entry to their first classroom of the day, when they change rooms, after break and before and after eating.

Please talk to your child about the ongoing importance of good **respiratory hygiene**. The 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach continues to be very important and we will have enough tissues and bins available in the school to support pupils and staff to follow this routine.

Classrooms in school need to be well **ventilated** and windows will be open throughout the school. We will of course ensure that we maintain a comfortable learning environment and will allow children to wear extra layers on particularly cold days. We also have a schedule of **cleaning** including frequent cleaning of touch points/ surfaces and shared spaces throughout the school.

Practical points to note

- **Equipment**
 - Pupils should bring their own equipment to school. Any shared resources will be cleaned thoroughly in accordance with the guidance. We ask that pupils limit the things they bring to school to include essentials such as: pencil case, bag, hats/coats, lunch box, other stationery, book and mobile phone (switched off and stored with them at all times).
- **Timings of the day**
 - Start of the day: KS3 8.40am and KS2 8.50am
 - End of the day: KS3 3.25pm and KS2 3.30pm
- **Clubs / extra-curricular**
 - Our programme of extra-curricular activities will soon recommence. We believe this is a hugely important aspect of school life and one which promotes the wellbeing of pupils. Clubs will be planned in accordance with the safety measures. Information will be sent home soon.
- **Uniform**
 - Children should wear their full school uniform and should bring their PE kit to school as necessary. Uniform plays a valuable role in setting an appropriate tone for the return to school. We understand that children may have outgrown some items and need replacements, so please contact us if you can foresee any delays in your child having the full uniform. We are also mindful that some families may benefit from additional support to obtain uniform items, so please don't hesitate to get in touch with us. We are more than happy to help.

- **Visitors**
 - To maintain the safety of the school site, we will be limiting visitors where possible. It would be great if parents could call or email the admin team in the first instance before arriving at school. Appointments with staff can then be arranged where needed. External visitors such as health professionals can still attend school. Music teachers will also be able to restart their lessons and will be in touch with parents in due course.
- **Lunch service**
 - The normal lunch service will be resumed. Children can return to their usual lunch routine (whether school or packed lunch). The cashless payment system continues and accounts can be topped up via School Gateway. Children will eat in year group bubbles and the canteen will be cleaned between sittings. Those in receipt of free school meals will continue to access those as normal (and provision will be made if a child cannot attend due to COVID-related absence).

Self-isolation / contacting the office

In line with national guidance, pupils and staff must not attend school if:

- they have one or more coronavirus symptoms
- a member of their household (including someone in their support bubble or childcare bubble if they have one) has coronavirus symptoms
- they are required to quarantine having recently visited countries outside the Common Travel Area
- they had had a positive test

If a pupil shows symptoms including a new and continuous cough or high temperature, or has a loss of, or change in, their normal sense of taste or smell, you will be contacted to collect your child and arrange to have a test as soon as possible. Other members of the household (including siblings and support/ childcare bubble members) should also self-isolate pending the test result. Please notify the school office as soon as you receive your test result so we can advise on the next steps.

We will continue to ask pupils to self-isolate if they have been identified as a close contact of a positive case. The self-isolation will remain as 10 days from the day of contact. We will contact you by email and/or text to alert you to the need to collect your child from school and to provide further information. When reporting a COVID-related absence, the admin team will ask you a number of questions including whether or not your child is able to access online learning. This will allow us to support you and your child further.

Transport

Regarding **getting to school**, children and young people are being encouraged where possible to avoid public transport, particularly at peak times, and to walk or cycle to school. Where your child relies on public transport to get to school or college, and cannot walk or cycle, the [safer travel guidance for passengers](#) will apply. Where your child uses dedicated school transport, the guidance for public transport will not apply. Your child may be asked to use a regular seating plan on their transport and measures will be put in place to ensure vehicles are cleaned regularly and boarding is

managed. However your child travels to school, we would ask you to remind them about the importance of social distancing and of adhering to year group bubbles where possible.

We understand that you may be keen to walk your child to school, but we ask that, to allow for social distancing, you drop your child off at the main entrance to the school site where staff will be on duty to guide your child in the right direction.