

Dear Parent/Carer,

As you will almost certainly be aware, it is the government's plan that all students return to school full time at some point during the week beginning 8<sup>th</sup> March.

### **The staggered return to school from 8<sup>th</sup> March**

As part of this full return to school we are required to offer three Covid lateral flow tests to all students at intervals of three to five days – where consent has been received for testing, and where the student has not already had a positive Covid diagnosis in the preceding 90 days. The first of these tests needs to be carried out before students return to the classroom. To facilitate this first test, students will be asked to attend for their first test and to return home while they wait for the result. Appointment times for each tutor group will be communicated separately. Students who test negative may return to school the following day to follow their normal teaching timetable, along with the few students who are not being tested. The exception to this is our final two tutor groups to be tested (P7 and R7) who will be held in school in a secure, socially distanced location until their results are available. The second and third tests for each student will be carried out during the school day and will be completed within the first two school weeks. Following this, students will be issued with home testing kits.

Due to the significant time pressure of testing so many students, we will be asking parents to register their child on the testing site in advance - but not more than 24 hours in advance. We will be sending out the link to the website, the site code, and a unique bar code with instructions.

Testing is taking place in the Lower Gym and students will need to enter via the external doors by the changing rooms and exit via the fire exit creating a one-way system. They must wear a face mask and remain socially distanced at all times. For their first test they will only be on site for the duration of their test and will not be able to access any other areas of the school or congregate in any areas. The testing time slots will be sent out with the registration instructions and we ask for your support in ensuring students arrive on time. Delivering 4500 tests over 11 working days is a mammoth task for the support staff team involved. On the day of each year group's first test, live online lessons will be suspended since there will be considerable disruption: some independent work will be set instead.

The staggered return will be as follows:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Lateral flow tests (students only attending at appointed time to undertake test, then returning home)</b>	<b>Return to school for on-site lessons</b>
Tuesday 2 <sup>nd</sup> March	Years 12 and 13 (first test)	
Friday 5 <sup>th</sup> March	Years 12 and 13 (second test)	
Monday 8 <sup>th</sup> March	Year 10 and 11 (first test)	Years 12 and 13
Tuesday 9 <sup>th</sup> March	Year 8 and 9 (first test)	Years 10 and 11
Wednesday 10 <sup>th</sup> March	Year 7 tutor groups A, B, F, L, N, S (first test)	Year 8 and 9
Thursday 11 <sup>th</sup> March	P7 and R7 will go straight to the Lower Gym for their first test when they arrive in school. They will be held in school (in a Covid secure	Year 7 (but note special arrangements for tutor groups P7 and R7)

	environment) until their test results are known. They should be able to go to their normal lessons from period 3 at the latest	
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### **Covid controls in place**

Almost all of the Covid controls that have been in place since September will continue, including the staggered start and end to the day; the split lunchtimes; the mostly fixed teaching rooms; and the “bubble” arrangement in school. Since students (and parents) are already very familiar with these I have including them again at the end of this letter in a section marked, **“Information below is unchanged since September”** – since you may feel you do not need to read that information again.

The only two significant changes to the Department for Education guidance to schools are:

- The lateral flow testing being offered to all students (the first three tests on site, then moving to using home testing kits), and
- The requirement to wear face coverings (mask rather than visors or shields) in classrooms and other indoor communal areas where social distancing is not possible. There are some students who are exempt from wearing face coverings, but we will use social distancing as an alternative COVID control for those not wearing masks.

### **Stop Day and *The Mark***

It has been a delight looking at the photos of how creatively students spent Stop Day. The editors of the *The Mark*, Freya and Amy, have put together a bumper March edition celebrating our students’ creativity so please do have a look at *The Mark* via the front page of the website. The prefects continue to work on the *Together in Isolation* project and now have a wealth of material to add.

### **Wellbeing, testing, and returning to school**

We think many students will be excited at the prospect of returning to on-site learning, but also understand that they may be a little anxious about the testing programme and safety in general. James Okulaja, Head Student, is putting together a video to show students what the testing entails so it feels more familiar – details to follow.

Also, if, after digesting the information on the return to on-site learning, you or child has any questions or worries, please don’t hesitate in contacting your child’s form tutor to arrange a time to work through any concerns. Form tutors will be using tutor time to talk through worries and signposting students to people and resources should they need them. Your child can also email their Y13 prefect with questions or concerns too.

### **Uniform**

As stated in Mrs Horstrup’s previous communication, we will be somewhat flexible on uniform initially, and trainer-style school shoes are now permitted (permanently) but must follow the strict guidelines in terms of having leather uppers, completely black and discreetly branded.

This charity in Medway helps provide second hand uniform [https://www.facebook.com/WonderfullyMadeMedway/?ref=page\\_internal](https://www.facebook.com/WonderfullyMadeMedway/?ref=page_internal)

### ***Elevate* session on assessment - TONIGHT**

*Elevate* are back with another webinar, this time on **Effective Preparation for Assessments**

**Date:** Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2021

**Time:** 6:00 – 7:00pm

**Registration link:** <https://get.elevatecoaching.info/uk/register>

Now that we know that GCSE and A level grades will be awarded by schools using a range of evidence like PEQs, classroom tasks and coursework, it is likely that GCSE and A level students will be preparing for some or all of these different types of assessment across the next couple of months. This *Elevate* session has been developed to help support parents and students giving practical study strategies and avoiding overload and stress. Our aim at RMGS is to be both supportive and transparent in all assessment opportunities in the process of awarding of grades for our students, so please do not panic about assessment: it will be manageable and supported.

The previous *Elevate* session on **Stress and Wellbeing** can be watched here <https://get.elevatecoaching.info/uk/replay>.

I would like again to thank you for your continued support and understanding of our current situation and of the fact that our plans are, by necessity, likely to change as new guidance and information become available. This letter will be available on the school website from 2<sup>nd</sup> March, but we will obviously contact you directly if there are any significant changes to our plans.

I wish you and your family well.

Yours faithfully,

Alan Moore  
(Headteacher)

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***Information below is unchanged since September***

We have been given detailed guidance on approaches to implement which are essential to reduce health risks. You will be able to see our full risk assessments on the school website.

In addition to what we are being asked to do, the government has asked parents, carers and children to support schools in various ways – but most crucially by:

- *ensuring that anyone who has coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, or has someone in their household who does, does not attend school - this means if your child, or someone in your household, has symptoms you should not send them to school*
- *engaging with the NHS Test and Trace process so that cases can be identified and action taken - this means if your child develops symptoms, you should arrange for them to get a test and you should inform your school of the results of that test*

If you would like to see the full guidance, this is the link:

Guidance for secondary schools:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/964351/Schools\\_coronavirus\\_operational\\_guidance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/964351/Schools_coronavirus_operational_guidance.pdf)

**Arrangements to reduce mixing between groups (by keeping each year group in a separate bubble)**

1. The majority of the lessons for each Year Group will take place in a zone within the school. As a general rule, the students stay in one place and the staff members move around
  - a. For Years 7 to 9 almost all of their lessons will be in the same room with their tutor group. For example, the eight Year 7 tutor groups will occupy the 6 rooms in L block and the 2 normal classrooms in R block. That Zone (L block / R block) will be the Year 7 Zone. Each tutor group will have almost all of their lessons in a fixed room – which will also be their form room. Teachers will move to that room to deliver their lesson, following the “normal” timetable
  - b. For Years 10 to 13, students will need to change groups between lessons to allow for their different option subjects and sets. The majority of their lessons will be in one Zone however, so they will not mix with other year groups. An example is Year 10 who will be based in H block. That Zone (H block) will be the Year 10 Zone. Almost all of the lessons for Y10 will be in rooms in the H block, so teachers will move to the H block to teach their Year 10 lessons. All Year 10 form rooms will also be in H block
2. Some movement by classes out of their Zone will happen to allow limited access to some specialist rooms. It will not be possible to facilitate all lessons which normally require specialist rooms, but priority will be given to Years 13, 11, 12 and 10 (in that order) in attempting to give some access to specialist rooms in Design Technology, Art, Music, Computing, Science and PE
3. There will not be any one-way systems within any zone, since that would potentially create more mixing. It is clear that, since movement will be largely within a single zone, using the most logical and direct route minimises mixing.
4. Students will be issued with lanyards (a different colour for each Year Group) both to hold their cashless catering card (to remove the need to use fingerprint scanners) and to make it easier to check that students are in the correct zones. Students are required to wear these at all times
5. There are toilets in or adjacent to each zone, and students will only be allowed to use the toilets in their own zone. Along with other enhanced and more frequent cleaning around the school, the toilets will be cleaned frequently

### **Timings of the school day, and other changes to provision**

1. There will be some staggered timings to the start and end of the school day, to minimise congestion and mixing. Limited space on site means that Year 12 and Year 13 will largely be on home study when they do not have a lesson. F3 and the library will remain available for those with “trapped” study time in the middle of the day

Year group	Start	Finish
Year 7	08:25	15:00
Year 8	08:30	15:05
Year 9	08:35	15:10
Year 10	08:40	15:15
Year 11	08:45	15:20
Years 12 and 13	08:50	after 15:20

2. Teaching staff will escort their classes off site at the end of the day. There will be no access via Thamesview Primary School, so students must use the Pump Lane gates.
3. We would ask that you try to avoid your children arriving significantly earlier than these times. Students who do arrive early will have to proceed directly to their zones. A breakfast service will be provided, but only students using this service will be permitted in the hall. The hall will be permanently set up with its own year zones utilising the

whole of the hall, not just the refectory area – which will be used for this breakfast service and again at lunchtime

4. Very few extra-curricular activities will be able to run. Some extra-curricular activities involving only one year group may be possible, but details will not be available until later
5. There will be no common time for mid-morning break. Instead, period 2 will run for 70 minutes and each year group will take a break during period 2. There will be no outside “play” during mid-morning break. Students not purchasing food must remain in their zone. Students choosing to purchase food must do so and then leave as quickly as possible to minimise the chance of them meeting students from other year groups. Students will be allowed to eat in their zone or form room if necessary, so it is important that students do not bring products containing nuts into school

	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Years 12/13
09:50	may queue 09:50 may purchase 09:55 back in zone	period 2	period 2 may queue 10:00 may purchase 10:05 back in zone	period 2	period 2 may queue 10:10 may purchase 10:15 back in zone	period 2
	period 2	may queue 10:20 may purchase 10:25 back in zone period 2	period 2	may queue 10:30 may purchase 10:35 back in zone period 2	period 2	may queue 10:40 may purchase 10:45 back in zone
11:00						

6. Three year groups will have lunch during the “normal” period 4, and then will have their period 4 lesson during the normal lunch time. Students will be allowed to “play” outside during their lunch time, but must stay in certain separate year group areas. In wet weather, students will need to stay in their form rooms. The timings for lunch for each year group are:

	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Years 12/13
11:50	may purchase food from 11:55	period 4	may purchase food from 12:05	period 4	may purchase food from 12:15	period 4
12:40	period 4	may purchase food from 12:45	period 4	may purchase food from 12:55	period 4	may purchase food from 13:05
13:35						

7. **PE Kit.** On PE days students will need to wear PE kit to travel to school and bring their uniform as back up. We will not have access to the changing rooms unless students need to change into their emergency uniform if their kit is muddy or wet. PE lessons will begin as timetabled straight away.

