

26 February 2021

Dear Parents / Carers

Firstly, I would like to thank you for your support during this last period of lockdown and say how much myself and my team are looking forward to seeing all students return to on-site schooling.

I have been really impressed with the way students have responded to remote learning, our engagement levels have been very high in comparison to many schools across the country. I would also like to thank all family members who have supported our students with their learning over the last few weeks, I know there have been challenges along the way!

As you are aware the Prime Minister announced earlier this week that all schools should now plan for a phased return of students from Monday 8 March. The operational guidance states 'Testing and return of pupils can be phased during the first week'.

In determining our arrangements we have considered the requirement to offer all students 3 lateral flow tests in the first few days of school, the needs of our public examination cohorts and the broader requirement to continue to offer remote learning to students up until March 5th for all and from March 8th for all those waiting to return into school. The following schedule provides an outline of our plans. Please be aware these are the LATEST dates students will return to school, if the testing regime means we are able to get students back into school quicker, then we will inform you as soon as possible.

Date	Students	Notes
Monday March 1 st to Friday March 5 th	All years	Our remote learning provision continues, as does our keyworker provision in school. There will be no change to current arrangements apart from the fact 'live' lessons will conclude at the end of Thursday March 4 th .
Monday March 8 th	Years 11, 12 and 13 Years 7, 8, 9 and 10	All students in Years 11, 12 and 13 in school. Only keyworker students in Years 7, 8 & 9 will be in school, all other students will continue remote learning until they are back in school. I am afraid we are unable to offer Year 10 keyworker students a place in school on this day.
Tuesday March 9 th	Year 10 and 7L	All students in these cohorts will be in school from this date. Tutor groups in 7L are TOV, COP, LON and PAY.



		Keyworker students in Years 8, 9 and in 7R will be in school
Wednesday March 10 th	Year 8 and 7R	All students in these cohorts will be in school from this date. Tutor groups in 7R are CAR, MUN and CLO. Keyworker students in Year 9 will be in school.
Thursday March 11 th	Year 9	All students in school from this date.

Colleagues are working very hard to plan for the return of your children and make it as smooth as possible. Alongside setting work and feeding back remotely, staff have been working tirelessly to ensure the curriculum builds on knowledge and understanding and provides a sustained response to students' needs. It is important that we all support students as they re-connect with their teachers and their subjects and challenge them in their progress, and subjects are focusing on this in their planning.

We are also very conscious some students will not have found lockdown easy and may be feeling anxious about joining us/returning to TBS after a period of absence from formal schooling. We have a very strong support system including mentors, our student support worker, our mental health first aider, tutors, heads of year and external agencies and organisations. The well-being of students will continue to be central to our work. If as a parent/carer you have any specific concerns about your child returning into school, please do not hesitate to contact their tutor or head of year.

An extensive risk assessment has been completed to support the full reopening of the school. Our plans described in this letter will be reviewed constantly with the first formal review at Easter. If there are any changes, I will communicate these with you then.

Attendance, Equipment and Uniform

- Students will be expected to fully attend school and be punctual on arrival.
- Please ensure your child has the right equipment for school as we need to avoid sharing such items. Support is available for pupil premium students, please email Mr Dan Johnson on djohnson@blandfordschool.org.uk if you need assistance. Students will need the equipment *which is attached*.
- Uniform - all students are asked to be in line with our uniform policy.
- PE and GCSE Dance lessons - our changing rooms will continue to be out of action. Students are asked to come into school in kit only on days they have these two subjects (they will not need to change into proper uniform at all on these days). Students are asked to wear plain black tracksuit bottoms or leggings. I am sorry this temporary change to our policy needs to continue. They may have shorts or a skort underneath to wear for the actual lesson. It is also recommended for students to bring a sweatshirt or fleece in the event of colder weather as the majority of PE lessons will be outside (these should be a dark, plain colour and without large logos on them). Rain jackets will be permitted on a temporary basis, these should ideally also be dark in colour and without large logos. Students will be expected to remove



jackets during the lesson if staff feel the weather does not require them. The majority of PE lessons will take place outside in line with government guidance.

- Students are advised to wear an unseen layer under their uniform if it is cold and wear a coat to school as students will be meeting outside and ventilation in classrooms will need to continue.

Behaviour

- We are always impressed by how students behave in school and their observance of our values of respect, a positive attitude, effort and perseverance (REAP). We look forward to this continuing as students return full-time to the classroom. Good behaviour and a positive attitude allows all students to learn and will ensure the best possible environment for students to settle back into school and progress in their learning.
- Our behaviour policy was revised for this academic year, taking the impact of the pandemic and the needs of our students into consideration. These changes will remain in place for this second return. Where behaviour is not allowing our staff to meet the needs of all learners, a formal warning will still be issued. Where students fail to respond to this reminder, they will be immediately spoken to by a senior member of staff (outside of the class) and will have an opportunity to share any concerns or difficulties. Students will then be placed back into their class and will serve a detention on the same day (if periods 1 – 4) or the following day if period 5, providing a further opportunity for reflection and communication. Where students are still not able, for whatever reason, to meet the standards of behaviour required in a calm purposeful and safe learning environment, other arrangements will be made for their supervision. After school detentions will be arranged as necessary and parents are asked to fully support these.
- Students whose poor behaviour is persistent, who do not comply with our arrangements or do not work with us collaboratively in improving their behaviour, will need to be excluded from school for a period as the restrictions do not allow us some of the flexibilities we had in the past. I would urge all parents to talk to your children about the necessity of being 'in line' with our rules and following reasonable instructions in what remain challenging times, for the benefit of the whole community.
- Our mobile phone policy remains the same so no mobile phones should be used until students exit onto Milldown Road. Phones and headphones should be switched off and placed in bags at all times. Where students are anxious about the return and feel the need to contact their parents, this can easily be arranged by speaking to a member of staff.

Catering and drinks during the day

- The caterers will be providing a 'grab and go' service at breaks and lunches. Students may of course bring in a packed lunch if they prefer. Meals will be available for any students in receipt of free school meals.
- Students are asked to bring in an adequately sized water bottle so the school water fountains do not get overcrowded.
- Payments for food should all be via ParentPay to avoid the use of cash. New students will be given a card on arrival, and existing students should use their card issued for photocopying. If you require activation details, please email the office.



Contacting school

- Please ring us on 01258 451121 if you have any queries or email reception on office@blandfordschool.org.uk. There is an answer phone in out of office hours. Office hours are 08.30 – 17.00.
- If you know the colleague you wish to contact then use the normal email address/telephone numbers you may have. Please contact the relevant Head of Faculty for academic matters in the first instance and the Head of Year or tutor if your query is of a pastoral nature. The SENDCo will assist any parent of a child with SEND, please contact her in the normal manner.

Curricular and Extra- Curricular

- The majority of extra-curricular provision will continue to be suspended, as are all school trips. However, we are keen to recommence some activities including academic support groups for public examination cohorts which will be arranged as necessary and students will be informed individually.
- The library remains closed at the moment but there are designated registration slots where children are able to collect and return books. The Blandford Library also runs an excellent 'click and collect' service which I would encourage you to use.
- I would like to take this opportunity to thank Anna Hayball, our Literacy Coordinator for managing the staff in their reading of the Sherlock Holmes mystery, 'A Study In Scarlet' by Arthur Conan Doyle. If your child has not watched the video footage then they just need to check their emails as she has emailed students the link.
- Parents have also received a World Book Day digital token via email so you can pick up a free book at W H Smith or Tesco.

Remote Learning - arrangements from Monday March 8th

- Teachers will continue to provide remote lessons for students until the date they are due back in school.
- There will be no 'live' lessons after Thursday, 4 March.
- Students will receive independent work that will continue to meet the requirements of the curriculum.

Safety

- There will continue to be an enhanced cleaning regime in school with extra cleaning being carried out during the course of the day.
- Students are asked to bring in some sanitising hand gel (in a small quantity) and adequate tissues. I appreciate this is expensive but if you are able to assist us then it would be really helpful to our community. We installed some sanitising units across the school (for example, in IT rooms) last year but we are unable to resource the whole school with these units. Students will be asked to wash their hands regularly during the day, if parent/carers could ask students to wash their hands before leaving home as well, this would be very helpful.
- Windows and doors will be open to ensure adequate ventilation.
- There will be some one-way systems which we ask students to observe.



- Desks will face forward in the majority of classrooms. Music were using the hall in the autumn but will be re-roomed for two weeks from March 8th to allow testing to be set up in this area. Students will be informed of the room changes.
- The use of equipment and resources will be in line with government guidance. Subjects this particularly relates to include PE, music, design, art, science.
- There will be no large indoor gatherings. Assemblies will be conducted in tutor rooms.

Social Distancing and Face Masks

- In order to minimise contact and mixing, each year group will remain in their 'bubbles'.
- Each day, on arrival, years 7 – 11 will go straight to their external zones (these have not changed from before Christmas). The sixth form will go straight to the sixth form area, The Well or direct to tutor groups. Heads of Year will greet students in these areas and the children will then be collected by tutors to go to tutor time. At each lesson changeover, years 7 – 11 will return to the external area to be collected by their teachers, the same area will be used for break and lunch.
- **A crucial change to our previous arrangements** is that in line with government guidance face masks will be required to be worn by all students (unless exempt) *in lessons*, as well as to and from their external zones (which has been the norm) and whilst waiting in the zones to move off to the next lesson. Staff will also wear face masks in classrooms although teachers may remove them if doing so allows them to deliver lessons more effectively. Classrooms have been set up to allow a 2 metre distance between students and staff. Staff will of course wear their masks if they are moving around the room. *The government have advised they will be reviewing this decision at Easter and we will adapt our procedures accordingly.*
- Students are advised to clean their hands before they put their face mask on (which is why it will be very useful if students have sanitiser on them), store them in a plastic bag in their school bag when they are not using them, dispose of them (if necessary) in the school bins and have a spare face mask with them (as we will be unable to provide the quantity required).
- If students do not bring a suitable face covering, they will be issued with one and a small charge will be made to cover the cost of this.

Testing (Lateral Flow Tests) and Covid 19 symptoms (action to take if necessary)

- We have conducted over 1400 lateral flow tests since January '21 and will be scaling up our testing facilities ready for March 8th. We have a testing team of 16 which includes myself, Liz Bishopp, Business Manager; Stephen Collins, Lead First Aider; governors, staff and community volunteers including an ex-GP.
- Testing is optional but very much encouraged as it remains a vital part of the plan to suppress the virus. Consent forms have been sent to parents this week with an urgent deadline of noon today for their return.
- As students return to school they will commence their normal timetabled day, if they have requested a test they will be contacted by our team on the day they return to school and advised when they will be tested. The procedure will not take very long at all and the testing team will be very kind in supporting those who are having a test for the first time (and



subsequently!). Where possible we will be having extended tutor periods to allow for testing, students will be informed of this on their first day.

- All students who have opted to be tested will be tested three times over a ten day period, after which time they will be provided with home test kits. Students who have been in school as part of the keyworker provision may receive home test kits earlier as many of these students have been tested as part of our current arrangements. Please be aware we are reliant on test kits being delivered to us on time although we are advised they will arrive during the course of the next week.
- If there are any positive cases following lateral flow tests then we will contact parents/carers immediately.
- Any individual experiencing COVID 19 symptoms, or anyone in the household, should not attend school until they have completed their quarantine period. Government guidance can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance>

The School Day/Travel

- We will be encouraging, as far as possible in a school context, that students socially distance.
- All students are asked **not to arrive at school until 08.20 am** (unless they are on buses) as for the reasons outlined below, we will unfortunately not be able to welcome students safely onto site until this time. This remains a change from our normal policy and I respectfully ask parents comply with this request. All children must be in school and in their zone by 08.40 am.
- Although school buses will be operating, where there is an alternative means of transport, students should avoid using the school buses or public transport. All students on buses must use face masks and on arrival at school their face mask must be put into a plastic bag and stored in their school bag, students are then asked to sanitise their hands.
- Parents are asked to drop students off-site and as a last resort use the leisure centre car park. Please be aware there will be no vehicular access via the Milldown gate before 09.00 and after 15.15pm in order to ensure the safety of children attending The Milldown School. Parents are asked not to drive down to our reception area at the start and end of days, or drop students off on our internal roadway adjacent to Blocks One and Three as this must be kept free for bus drop offs.
- Students are invited to walk or cycle to school. Children are asked not to cycle through the main gates by Milldown Road, they must walk onto site. Please re-emphasise this with students as we are concerned some are ignoring this instruction and the area does get busy.
- Students are advised to not overload their bags, they just need to make sure they have the right equipment and books.
- We will continue with a staggered end of day with year 7 leaving at 3.20pm, year 8 at 3.25pm and all other year groups after they have returned to their zones at 3.30pm. As before Christmas this will mean some students are not leaving school, if walking, until 3.35pm.



Future matters

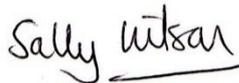
- There will unfortunately be no on-site evening events up to Easter (we will review our summer term events at this point). The following are planned and will be delivered virtually, information will be provided in advance: Thursday 4 March, Year 8 Parents' Evening; Thursday 25 March, Year 12/13 Parents' Evening. Both will commence at 16.00pm and conclude at 18.30pm.

Finally, I would like to say an enormous thank you for the supportive messages myself and the team have received over recent weeks. I know how much staff have appreciated your feedback especially as many of them have been juggling the demands of their own personal lives (often including childcare) whilst also delivering remote learning, 'live' lessons and keyworker provision. I am also very grateful to our governing board for their pragmatism and support.

We all look forward to welcoming students back to school. The sun may even start to shine!

I will keep you updated in the coming weeks.

Yours sincerely



Sally Wilson
Headteacher

Enc. Equipment List

