

23rd February 2021

Dear Parents\Carers,

I am sure you will have heard the Prime Minister's announcement yesterday, outlining his roadmap for easing lockdown measures and, eventually, returning to a much more normal world. The first step, which we all welcome, is the reopening of schools to all students from Monday 8th March. We have missed our students... the school is just not the same place without them and we are excited for their return. We are now entirely focussed on making this happen safely and effectively, and I will be writing to you later in the week with fuller details of our planned approach.

We know that a key part of school return is the lateral flow tests that we will be carrying out for staff and students and this will begin next week. Whilst the test is voluntary we do encourage everyone to take part and I am delighted that we have had an overwhelmingly positive response from our call for providing parental consent. I would also like to thank those parents and carers who have volunteered to support us in this process and have already completed the required paperwork as well as the training. I now feel extremely confident that we will be able to complete this part of the process of school return extremely efficiently.

The return to face-to-face teaching will begin the following week, and will be a staggered approach. We will initially prioritise students in Years 10, 11, 12 and 13. We will return other year groups day by day so that, by Thursday 11th March all students will be in school and attending face-to-face lessons.

I know that many of us are keen to return to the "old normal" of students able to move freely around the school, having setted groups in our core subjects and department areas returning to their previous functions (particularly the delivery of practical lessons in key stage 3) and we do hope that this will be the case before the end of the summer. However, for the moment we must retain the systems and structures we had in September. Thus the "staggered" timetable will be reintroduced from Monday 8th March (also for those who are working remotely at the start of that week), the Key Stage 3 zones will be reinstated and the isolating of students into their year group "bubble" will again be in place.

In common with all other schools we will also be introducing some additional safety measures. Students and staff will be required to wear face coverings not only in the communal areas but also in classrooms where two metre social distancing is not possible. Families will be issued with their own testing kits so they can carry out their own twice weekly rapid flow Covid-19 tests, and teachers will be testing themselves twice weekly too.

Highgate Wood School Student Council supports individual action to address the issues of Climate Change and promotes the United Nations top 10 recommendations.



We are conscious of the potential mental health concerns of all students, but particularly those in the exam years who face additional stresses. We will be working very closely with students in these groups to ensure we have systems in place to properly support them. Those in Year 11 will not be sitting any mock exams until after Easter, whilst those in Year 13 for whom mock exams could not take place in January will need to sit these assessments later this term. They will be provided with help and guidance throughout.

Families of Year 7 and Year 12 will be aware that there are scheduled Parent Consultation Evenings on the horizon. These will go ahead as planned, but they will be virtual events. Indeed we anticipate that for the rest of this term all parental meetings will be conducted virtually, including the PSA's fundraiser this Friday.

As we go through the fine detail of the government's proposals for school return and work through the practical implications of the different stages, we expect to be able to provide families with much more detail in the coming days. In the meantime I do hope that this letter has provided you with some useful information to help prepare and plan for the coming weeks.

With thanks for your continued support.

Regards

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Cozier". The signature is stylized and written in a cursive-like font.

Patrick Cozier
Headteacher