



23 February 2021

Dear Parents/Carers

I hope you and your families are well. After a challenging first half-term of remote learning and virtual lessons, the half-term break was no doubt well received by students and staff. As expected, last night, the Prime Minister announced schools would fully re-open from Monday 8 March.

We are required to carry out Asymptomatic Testing in school and as a result, we will implement a phased return to school from Monday 8 March to ensure all students have one negative test prior to returning to face-to-face lessons in school. We have flexibility on how to do this, but the government expects us to prioritise vulnerable children and children of critical workers and Year groups 10 and 11.

I will write to you with more detail before the end of this week, with timings of when your child will be expected to come into school for their test prior to returning to lessons in school. It is likely we will be able to welcome back each year group on the following days, subject to any changes in guidance:

- Year 11 – Monday 8 March
- Years 8 and 10 – Tuesday 9 March
- Years 7 and 9 – Wednesday 10 March.

Vulnerable children and children of critical workers who are already attending school, will continue to do so as usual.

### **Rapid Lateral Flow Testing (LFT)**

We continue to operate weekly Lateral Flow tests (LFTs) for students and school staff currently attending school. This testing has been efficiently and effectively carried out by various trained members of the staff team, to whom I am extremely grateful.

Parental consent will be required before any student is tested and testing is voluntary. If you have not already given consent, please complete the attached form in the link [here](#).

### **Other protective measures that will be in place:**

- Each year group will be 'bubbled' to minimise contact with individuals who are required to self-isolate.
- Face coverings must be worn by adults and students when moving around the school premises outside of classrooms, such as in corridors and communal areas. **Face coverings must also be worn by adults and students when in the classroom.** Face coverings do not need to be worn by students when outdoors on the school

premises. If your child exempt from wearing a face covering, please contact Mr Wordsworth.

- Regular hand sanitising will be expected throughout the day along with thorough hand washing.
- Good respiratory hygiene for everyone by promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach.
- The site team will maintain enhanced cleaning, including cleaning frequently touched surfaces often.
- Maintaining social distancing wherever possible.
- Keeping occupied spaces well ventilated.

### **Exam grades for Year 11**

We are expecting details from OFQUAL, (The Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation) soon about how Year 11 students will be awarded exam grades this summer. When we have further information on this, we will contact parents and students with details. What has been clear from the outset of this lockdown, is the expectation that students in Year 11 should be continuing with their studies and enjoying their learning as much as possible.

A survey for your child to complete will be circulated to them in the next few days, but please find a link to a single question parental survey [Parent Survey - February 2021 \(office.com\)](#). Information provided in the survey will be treated in the strictest of confidence. Your involvement in this survey would be much appreciated.

If your family's employment or financial situation has changed, your child/ren may be entitled to Free School Meals (FSM) and the benefits linked to FSM. You can apply for FSM online at [Free school meals \(somerset.gov.uk\)](#).

The country has made huge sacrifices during the pandemic. Many individuals and families have suffered enormously over the last 12 months. When normality starts to return, the staff at The Castle School will do all we can to support your child and ensure that the transition back into school is as smooth, safe and as positive as possible.

Again, thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely



Mr Lamb  
Headteacher