



WEST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL

IMBERHORNE SCHOOL

Headteacher: Mr Martin Brown

Compassion
Achievement
Respect
Endeavour

*The cornerstones of our
learning community*

26th February 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

We are really pleased that the proposed return to school dates have now been confirmed. From Monday 8th March students will start to return to school and lessons. We know how important this is for their welfare and their learning, extended isolation is unhealthy in many ways. Whilst some may find their return a little unsettling at first, I am confident that students will quickly settle back into routines. This was our experience in September, after the lengthy period of lockdown from March to July 2020, we were extremely impressed with how quickly students adjusted to school again. They made rapid progress and quickly grew in confidence. We expect to see the same again but appreciate this will vary from person to person. Some students, inevitably, will require more support than others. Please let us know if you have concerns, we will monitor students carefully.

As you are aware, there is an expectation that students are tested, using lateral flow tests, prior to returning to school. This is a significant undertaking for us. We believe that we can test approximately 500 students per day. As advised, we have created a programme for a phased return across both sites to ensure we can best manage this process. Parents need to provide consent prior to students being tested, a separate letter will clarify how to provide consent if you have not done so already. Testing is supposed to identify asymptomatic individuals who may inadvertently be carrying the infection. Whilst there is no compulsion to take the test it should be said that many staff and students are very apprehensive about returning to school. A thorough testing system provides them with reassurance at this time. I should add that any individuals who have had a positive COVID 19 test recently are advised to not participate in a lateral flow test for 90 days from the date of their positive test. If this is the case for your son or daughter please confirm that with us, contacting your son or daughter's Head of Year in the first instance.

For their first test students will be invited into school at specific times to be tested and then return home. Once the test results are confirmed as negative, students will attend school from the following day. Students are expected to be tested three times in school (on each occasion within a 3 – 5 day window of the previous test), after this they are expected to test themselves, at home, with kits provided by the school.

Our timetable for this is as follows:

- Students in Years 11, 12 and 13 will be tested on Monday 8th March and return to school lessons on Tuesday 9th March
- Students in Year 7 and Year 10 will be tested on Tuesday 9th March and return to school lessons on Wednesday 10th March
- Students in Year 8 and Year 9 will be tested on Wednesday 10th March and return to school lessons on Thursday 11th March



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Testing will take place on the site that students usually attend, further detail will be provided regarding particular timings for students.

There will be no live lessons on Monday 8th March, all work will be set in Google Classroom. This is a date when teachers will be undertaking further detailed planning and preparation ready for face to face lessons.

On Tuesday 9th and Wednesday 10th March students being tested will have work set in Google Classroom to manage in their own time. Other students will either have face to face lessons or live lessons, as appropriate.

We will not run our existing pods from Monday 8th March, we need to redeploy the staff who have been managing them and use the spaces to accommodate students as they return. If this creates particular difficulties for you please let us know, we may still be able to manage very small numbers if necessary. For KS3 queries please contact tmonaghan@imberhorne.co.uk, for KS4 queries please contact hluxton@imberhorne.co.uk

Our canteen, on both sites, will be operational from Tuesday 9th March (at Imberhorne Lane) and Wednesday 10th March (at Windmill Lane) as required. Students will return to the routines and arrangements that were in place during the Autumn term. These are as follows:

- Year groups taught in zones with separate entrances and exits to the sites, this helps provide appropriate separation
- Students wearing their coloured lanyards to help staff clearly identify and keep separate different year groups
- Enhanced cleaning around the school including the use of hand sanitisers every time students enter a building
- Separate social spaces and food distribution points for all year groups
- Queueing for lessons outside, therefore keeping corridors clear
- Students wearing their PE kit on days when they have PE lessons, only clothing with the school logo on can be worn in lessons (School PE kit or our school hoodies). If students wish to cover their legs they are allowed to wear dark tracksuit trousers over their PE kit

In addition to this, students are now expected to also wear masks when inside buildings, at all times. Previously we asked that students wore masks when in transit inside buildings. They are now expected to wear masks in lessons as well (previously this happened in a few subjects). Clearly this is not possible in practical lessons like PE when students' movement may be impaired by wearing masks. These arrangements will be in place until Easter. We fully appreciate that wearing masks for extended periods can be uncomfortable. Students will continue to be escorted to lessons from their designated outdoor space. When outside students are not expected to wear masks, this means there will be at least a 10 minute break between each lesson when students do not wear masks, as well as normal break and lunch times when we expect students to be outside (unless we have wet weather). We know that some students are exempt from wearing masks on medical grounds. Please notify us if this is the case, students who are exempt will be provided with a card to carry with them to prove their exemption.

I apologise for what appears to be a long list of directions. I know many of you have questions and I wished to answer as many of these queries as possible. If you have further questions or queries I ask that you contact your son or daughter's Head of Year in the first instance.



I believe with the news about the national vaccination programme and the clear steps providing us with a route out of lockdown there is a greater feeling of positivity, we can see that the end is in sight. I wonder what our thoughts and views will be as we look back on this period, we will carry memories of this time for the rest of our lives. For many the experience is very personal and may be linked to feelings of great loss or personal trauma, plenty of families have been marked, deeply, by what has happened. In my assembly to students this week I spoke about taking small steps forwards, reaching out to others and building a sense of community. I know from conversations with students that they feel the experience has changed their habits and thinking in many ways. Ongoing research into our behaviour at this time suggests that we have, collectively, become more caring and compassionate, it is reassuring to believe that our humanity continues to shine through in such difficult times.

Yours faithfully

Mr M Brown
Headteacher