



In all things faithful

St Damian's RC Science College

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Headteacher

Mr S Logue BA (Hons), M.Ed., NPQH

2nd March 2021

Dear Parent/Carer,

The following letter gives details about how we are planning for pupils to return to school in a safe manner. I have deliberately kept all the information as simple as possible.

Pupils' return dates to school

Below are the plans which outline when pupils will be returning to school. This will be a *phased* return in order to facilitate our plans to mass test all the children in a safe manner.

- Monday 8th March: Year 11 only
- Tuesday 9th March: Years 7 & 10
- Wednesday 10th March: Years 8 & 9

Each year group should return to school on the day indicated above. This will allow us to test all the pupils safely. I understand that some parents may be apprehensive about the return. As Headteacher, I have to say that nowhere is 100% 'safe' but we have detailed procedures in place to make sure that it is Covid-secure. In essence, like before, pupils are returning to a safe, caring environment where through love and hope they will continue to flourish.

NB. All the pupils that have already been in school over the past few months should continue to attend school as normal.

Mass testing: outline of plans

The testing of both pupils and staff has been taking place since early January. This was a steep learning curve but the staff who have administered these tasks have been properly trained and are very proficient. In fact, many staff volunteered, and their efforts have been phenomenal. Importantly, these have been conducted safely and there have been no incidents.

The expectations are relatively simple and are as follows:

ALL pupils will be tested THREE times with a period of 3-5 days between each test.

After this, pupils will be issued with testing kits to test at home.

The table below shows the days when this testing will take place.

Week commencing 8 th March		Week commencing 15 th March	
Monday 8 th	Year 11	Monday 15 th	Years 8 and 9
Tuesday 9 th	Years 7 and 10	Tuesday 16 th	Year 11
Wednesday 10 th	Years 8 and 9	Wednesday 17 th	Years 7 and 10
Thursday 11 th	Year 11	Thursday 18 th	Years 8 and 9
Friday 12 th	Years 7 and 10	Friday 19 th	Testing finished

Due to the number of staff required to test pupils, it is expected that there will be some disruption to learning during the next few weeks as teachers will be supporting the testing.

St. Damian's RC Science College

Rapid Lateral Flow Testing Consent

NB: The following is just a reminder about pupil consent and was in the letter sent last week.

This will take place, with the sole aim to safeguard ALL in our community. This is NOT a medical procedure. We have been conducting these tests since the beginning of January and there have been NO issues at all. There is no real reason why all pupils can't undergo this test. To ensure a smooth running of the testing process when students return school, I ask that you complete your child's consent **before** returning to school [w/c 8th March 2021]. There are two simple steps to this process;

- **Step 1:** You will receive a TEXT message from 07507332277 which directs you to online consent form.
- **Step 2:** Once you have completed the form you **MUST respond to the TEXT message** with either 'YES' or 'NO' to activate your preference.

Consent only needs to be given once. It is as simple as that!

NB: Please see our Privacy Statement on our website www.stdamians.co.uk on how we process your information in line with GDPR.

To support pupils there is a page on the website with all the necessary information. Please follow the link to where you will find a link to consent, a video on how to perform a test and other information.

<https://www.stdamians.co.uk/covid-19-rapid-testing>.

What if the test is positive?

If your child tests positive in school, you will be called to pick them up from school. They then have to self-isolate for 10 days.

Expectations

The following are the expectations at school. I have separated them into simple headings for ease of readability. There have NOT been many major changes since before Christmas, so I reiterate what these are here. Pupils should be very familiar with the following expectations.

Social distancing

Pupils will be in the same groups as last time and will be socially distanced from other Year groups. Staggered lunch times will continue.

Masks

It is crucial that your child brings a mask to school. This is not an option and is part of the school uniform until further notice. I know that this may cause issues but the wearing of masks is now expected in the classrooms. As a general rule of thumb, if pupils are in the school building then a mask must be worn. When outside, pupils do not need to wear masks. I strongly advise that pupils have extra masks in their schoolbags. The school does not have an endless supply of masks. It is the responsibility of pupils to bring the masks that they need. I understand that the wearing of masks in classrooms may cause unnecessary stress to pupils, but it is hoped that this will be a short-term measure.

One-way systems

Again, these will be in place and all pupils must adhere to these. These are no different from the last time and pupils will already be familiar with these.

Year group zones

In order to create 'bubbles' to minimise social interaction, and hence to limit the transmission of Covid, pupils will continue to be in the same classes and zones as last time.

Washing hands and sanitising

As previously, pupils will be encouraged to wash their hands regularly. Hand sanitiser stations are in place for pupils to use before they enter the school. I strongly encourage that pupils will bring their own.

Mornings and afternoons

As in the Autumn term, the school will open at 8.40am. Please do not drop your child off before this time. Furthermore, the staggered exit times will also continue.

May I remind parents that Covid has seriously affected some members of staff. As Headteacher, I will not compromise on the safety of my staff at any time. ALL pupils are expected to follow these simple but fair rules. I ask that parents support the school with regards to the above.

Suspected Covid

Pupils must not attend school if they display any symptoms of Covid-19

The following is a reminder of these symptoms:

- ✓ A high temperature
- ✓ Losing sense of smell or taste
- ✓ A new continuous cough

If this is the case, they must self-isolate and go for a test.

Behaviour, uniform and attendance

As you would expect, our standards and expectations will not change. We expect all pupils to follow our 5 simple rules. These are transparent and underpin why our pupils [and parents 😊] love the school. When pupils returned in September and through to Christmas, the pupils' behaviour was simply brilliant. I expect the same on their return this March. As a school great behaviour and a positive attitude to learning is fundamental to our success.

Additionally, as a school we take great pride in our high uniform standards. I expect all pupils to return in full uniform. Please also remind your child to bring a mask as this is now part of the uniform. I ask that masks are plain. Please would parents ensure that meal cards have sufficient funds so that pupils can purchase food in the dining room.

Our attendance is always above the National Averages, reflecting the simple fact that pupils love St Damian's. We pride ourselves on high levels of pupil attendance and expect this to continue during the Spring and Summer terms following the return to school. High levels of attendance give all pupils the best chance of achieving academic success.

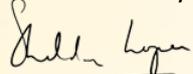
Transport to School

It is my understanding that buses will return to their normal schedules. I ask that parents speak to their children about wearing masks on the bus.

Finally...

We will welcome back your children with open arms. This is a community where children are at its heart. On behalf of the staff and the governors, I want to thank all the parents for both your patience during this difficult time and the overwhelming support over the past few months. It really is a testament to the great relationships we have as a proud Catholic school. I hope that over the next few months we will continue to grow as a community and get back to what we do best: educating your great children!

Yours sincerely



Mr Logue

Headteacher