



Introduction

As we now know, normal schooling will resume for all year groups on Mon 8 Mar, with a combination of Lateral Flow Testing (LFT) at school and at home for all pupils whose parents consented to testing at the start of the term, and for those did not give their consent in January, but who now subsequently consent to testing.

Any parents who did not give their consent to testing back in January, but who do now wish to do so, should complete [this brief online form](#).

Subsequent to the government's announcement on Monday, further information has been published by the Department for Education and other industry bodies (including HMC, the Society of Heads and the Boarding Schools Association) regarding the implementation of the testing programme, and we are now in a position to set out the process by which we will manage the return to school.

The purpose of this Update is to set out the details of the plan.

The return to school, and pupil testing

Pupils in Year 7 and above will be tested under close supervision, using a Lateral Flow Test [LFT], three times over the course of the final fortnight of term, between three and five days apart.

Having been tested three times in school, pupils will then be asked to self-administer a LFT on a twice-weekly basis.

On account of the term finishing one week early, however, the programme of three school-administered tests takes us neatly to the end of term, which means that the self-testing programme will not commence until the start of the Summer Term.

Further details of the self-testing programme will be published in due course, but as explained late in this Update, each pupil will be given a pack of LFT kits immediately prior to their departure from school at the end of term.

As we have only nine and a half teaching days left of term after the return to School we are anxious to minimise disruption to lessons, so it is good news that the government has confirmed that schools may initiate their testing programme before Mon 8 Mar.

The programme for the return to School, and for the final fortnight of term, is therefore as shown below.

DATE	TIME	YEAR GROUP TO BE TESTED
<p style="text-align: center;">Fri 5 Mar</p> <p style="text-align: center;">First test for day pupils</p> <p style="text-align: center;">In the Chapel</p>	12:10	Year 10
	13:00	Year 11
	13:45	Sixth Form
	14:30	Year 9
	15:15	Year 8
	16:00	Year 7
<p>Notes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pupils are not to socialise on arrival at school, and should make their way directly to the Chapel to be tested. 2. Having been tested, pupils will immediately leave the school site, and will receive their test result via the NHS Test & Trace Service. 3. In the event that a pupil receives a positive test result, the School will inform the pupil's parents. 4. We would ask the parents of day pupils to make every effort to bring their children to school at the time allocated for their year group. Should this prove impossible, however, you may bring your child to school at any time between 12:10 and 16:00. 		

DATE	TIME	EVENT
<p style="text-align: center;">Sun 7 Mar</p> <p style="text-align: center;">First test for returning UK boarders, and for boarders who have remained in school over lockdown.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">16:00 to 18:00</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">All Prep boarders to be tested on arrival</p> <p style="text-align: center;">At the Front Hall at the Prep</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Including weekly boarders</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">14:00 to 18:00</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">All College boarders to be tested on arrival</p> <p style="text-align: center;">In the Chapel at the College</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Including weekly boarders</p>
<p>Note:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Weekly boarders must return on the Sunday evening 2. Boarders must report direct to the testing station within the time window indicated 3. They are not to go to their boarding houses until they have received a negative test result. 4. Parents who accompany their children back to school must wait in the carpark until notified that their child has received a negative result. 5. Tea and coffee will be served from the carpark at Prep and College, to help pass the unforgiving minutes whilst you wait for your child's test result. 6. Should their child receive a positive test result, parents should take their child straight home. 		

Subsequent tests

The second and third school-administered tests will be on the following dates:

- Second Test Wed 10 Mar
- Third Test Mon 15 Mar

Weekly boarders

As noted above, weekly boarders should return to School on the evening of Sun 7 Mar, in order to be tested with the full boarders.

We would also ask that, in order to lower the risk of infection in a boarding house, weekly boarders remain at school for the weekend of Sat 13 – Sun 14 Mar.

Supporting the testing programme for pupils

A number of parents very kindly volunteered to support the testing programme at the start of the Lent Term, and we subsequently formalised that with an online proforma, asking for your details. As things turned out, we were put straight back into lockdown and the testing programme was essentially mothballed, but we have your details on file and may well approach those of you who kindly offered your services.

Testing and other measures

This Update is a good opportunity to repeat the point made by the government, that the testing programme in no way enables us to lower our guard in other areas, and it is worth quoting the latest guidance in full:

Schools should make clear to staff and pupils that a negative test result does not remove the risk of transmission. In some cases, someone who has tested negative may still have undetected disease and be infectious. It is therefore essential that everyone continues to follow good hygiene and observe social distancing measures whether or not they have been tested. Anyone who is displaying symptoms of COVID-19 who returns a negative result from a lateral flow test will still be required to self-isolate whilst the results from a lab-based PCR test is known.

It would be entirely understandable if the time that our pupils have spent in their family and household bubbles has made them a little rusty in their observation of the basic protocols for controlling the spread of the virus – hands, face, space – and it may also be that the successful roll-out of the vaccination programme inclines some of them to a degree of complacency in this respect. The recent improvement in the weather may also encourage some of our pupils to believe that they will soon be striding across the broad, sunlit uplands once more, and can consign thoughts of masks, hand sanitiser, social distancing to history.

This would be a mistake. It is absolutely vital that they remain on their guard, and from the moment they return to school all our pupils are expected to be scrupulous in their adherence to the protocols. We would be most grateful if you could do whatever you can in the coming week to remind your sons and daughters of the expectations.

Face coverings and visors

Our position with regards to face coverings for pupils is as follows:

- Pupils are required to wear facemasks in lessons, unless they are unable to do so for medical reasons.
 - Pupils are required to wear facemasks at all times in corridors and communal areas, apart from when eating, including in their House areas.
 - There is a degree of latitude in boarding houses, though we will once again be establishing households within each of the Houses, as was the case during the Michaelmas Term, and pupils will be expected strictly to adhere to these.

We understand that this is going to be uncomfortable and unpleasant, and for that reason lessons will run for no more than 45 minutes, giving pupils the opportunity to go outside, remove their masks, and get some fresh air.

As the weather improves, we will be encouraging our academic staff to open windows and doors, and – weather-permitting & without compromising the quality of teaching – to take their lessons outdoors.

We would also note that this is, of course, all subject to review, in the light of further government guidance.

The structure of the day and the extra-curricular programme

With the exception of some minor adjustments, and allowing for greater gaps between lessons to allow pupils to remove their masks and spend time in the fresh air, the structure of the day at both Prep and College will revert to how it was in the second half of the Michaelmas Term. This means that your sons and daughters will have a full teaching day, with buses departing from the Prep and 16:30 and from the College shortly after that.

The method of teaching

The overwhelming majority of pupils at the Prep will return to the classroom.

At the College, however, we are expecting a significant number of our overseas pupils not to return for the final fortnight of the term and to remain at home instead. We understand that for pupils in the Far East periods 5 & 6 will be in the late evening, and we would understand if this proves impossible for them. In order to help them to continue to engage with their lessons, however, our academic staff have been asked to adapt their teaching style.

Clearly, some classes will have fewer absentees than others – a Year 11 History set, for example, is likely to have fewer empty chairs than an Upper Sixth Further Maths set – so it will be a matter for the professional

judgement of the teacher to determine the extent to which the style and delivery of their lessons is angled towards a remote audience. At one end of the spectrum, the lesson will be delivered exactly as normal. At the other extreme – when the classroom may be largely empty – the lesson may be delivered in the same way as it has for the last eight weeks, entirely remotely through the magic of the internet.

Pupil dress

The expectation is that pupils will return to school in full school uniform. We understand, however, that some of them may well have grown a bit since they were last at school, and that consequently some items of uniform may be a little tight in places. If your son or daughter is struggling with uniform, please contact their Housemaster or Housemistress.

The end of term

Term will end at midday on Fri 19 Mar. Before leaving school each pupil – apart from those attending the Easter Holiday Camp at the Prep, or the Easter Holiday Swim Training Camp at the College – will be issued with a further LFT self-testing kit, and an instruction booklet.

They must keep the kit and the booklet safe over the course of the Easter holiday, then self-administer the test it no more than 24 hours before returning to school for the Summer Term, reporting the result using the online form (the link to which will be sent to them shortly before the end of the holiday), and via the NHS Test and Trace Service.

The Summer Term

Thursday's announcements by OfQual and the government regarding the formulation of centre-assessed grades and the timetable for their submission have enabled us to plan the basic shape of the Summer Term, particularly with regards to which year groups will be examined and when. We would hope to confirm the outline plan for the Summer Term over the course of next week, and details of the examination programme will be published in a further Parent Update.

It had been our intention to run Founder's Day and the Summer Ball on Sat 29 May 9 (at the start of the Summer Half-Term), but it is now clear that this will not be possible. We will therefore look to return Founder's Day and the Summer Ball back to their traditional position in the calendar, at the end of the Summer Term in early July. As we know, however, four months is a very long time in a pandemic, and anything might happen – so probably best not to rush out to buy a new hat quite yet.

And finally

As always, uncertainty remains regarding just about every aspect of school life, and there remains some detail to fill in around the edges of the plan for the return to school. It is hoped, however, that this Update provides you with a reasonably clear course to steer. Please do not hesitate, however, to contact Adam Reid (ReidA@mountkelly.com) or Dom Floyd (FloydF@mountkelly.com) should you have any questions, or concerns.

The storm has certainly not yet passed, but the glass is, perhaps, starting to rise, and we can look forward – though cautiously – to putting up some more sail in the coming weeks.