



Friday 26th February 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

Re: March 2021 re-opening plan

I would like to begin by thanking you for the way you have worked with us during another lockdown. Over the subsequent pages, I have outlined our plans for returning to school.

As always, if you have any questions please contact us via schoolclosure@readinggirlsschool.net and we will help you as soon as we can.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to be 'Jon Gargan', written over a white rectangular background.

Jon Gargan

Principal

RETURNING TO SCHOOL - the first two weeks

“You have the flexibility to consider how best to deliver testing on a phased basis from Monday 8th March 2021”

(DfE, 23rd Feb 2021)

In the light of Government announcement this week, we will be reopening school according to our timetable below. The first week will be a combination of returning to school as normal and continued online live lessons. All pupils will be back in school together for the first time by Friday 12th March 2021.

(i) 8th – 12th March 2021

	Staff	Year 11	Year 10	Year 9	Year 8	Year 7
Mon 8 th	Inset day & testing	No lessons	Testing from 8.30am then home	No lessons	No lessons	No lessons
Tues 9 th	In school teaching face-to-face and live online lessons	Testing from 8.30am then school as normal	School as normal	Testing from 8.30am then home. There are no lessons on this day.	Continue with online live lessons	Continue with online live lessons
Wed 10 th		School as normal	School as normal	School as normal	Continue with online live lessons	Testing from 8.30am then home. There are no lessons on this day.
Thurs 11 th		School as normal	School as normal	School as normal	Testing from 8.30am then home. There are no lessons on this day.	School as normal
Fri 12 th		School as normal	School as normal	School as normal	School as normal	School as normal

(ii) 15th - 19th March 2021

Pupils will be allocated times during lessons this week to have their second and/or third Lateral Flow Test. I will share this detail with you in next week's newsletter.

RETURNING TO SCHOOL – The Government’s plan for asymptomatic testing

“Pupils return to secondary school will be tested three times on site then once at home for the first two weeks from 8th March 2021. After that, they will be expected to be tested twice weekly at home and report results to the NHS Test & Trace, as well as to their school. Pupils will be allowed to attend lessons as normal after their first negative result. Secondary staff will also get twice weekly home tests.”

(DfE, 23rd February 2021)

(i) In-school testing

The testing is called **Lateral Flow Device (LFD) test**. It is a very quick and simple that takes a swab from the throat and nose. Results are revealed in 30 minutes. I would like to reassure parents that we have booked the **services of trained nurses** not school staff, to administer the tests. Nurses have been conducting these tests for pupils and staff on school site since January 14th so we are quite used to the routine.

For the purpose of the first test day for each year group, **as soon as pupils have been tested they are to leave school and return home**. We will not be allocating individual test times for the first test day per year group. We will just work through the year group. Results will be communicated to parents via school comms.

Albeit testing has not been made mandatory by the Government, it would certainly **help manage anxiety and build confidence** in a school community, to which over 600 people will be returning following lockdown, if as many pupils as possible took part in testing.

Therefore, parents wishing for their child to be tested at school, **must give their consent** to the school. **We will email consent forms to all parents on Wednesday 3rd March 2021.**

The Government’s **rationale for three tests** inside two weeks is firstly to identify anybody who may be asymptomatic and secondly, give pupils (and staff) practise so that they know how to self-test from home from week commencing 22nd March 2021.

Pupils and staff **who test positive** will then have to leave school and book a common PCR Covid test.

Pupils that will not take the test, will return to school when their year group is scheduled to return as per the schedule above. They should not come to school on their year group’s test day. There will be no lessons for their year group on that day.

(ii) Home self-testing

I will be joining a **DfE webinar on Thursday 4th March** to learn more about this process and will therefore update you in next week’s newsletter.

What I can tell you at this stage, is that pupils and staff who elect to home test from the week commencing 22nd March 2021, **will be supplied with self-test kits** that the Government are currently distributing to schools.

No consent form is required. The receipt of a self-test kit is giving consent. Parents will be required to upload results to NHS Test & Trace and inform the school but again, I will **share a system** for doing that with you next week.

RETURNING TO SCHOOL – school bus service

(i) **No 91 – Central Reading route**

This Reading bus service will operate as normal from Monday 8th March.

(ii) **School minibuses – Reading North and Reading North East routes**

The morning pick-up will operate as normal on Tuesday 9th March for our Year 9 girls coming to school for a test but because of the hugely staggered departure times, there will be no return journey. If that causes a significant problem for any of our year 9 parents, please contact Mrs Hargrave directly and she will be able to help you.

From Wednesday 10th March, these routes will operate a normal school day a.m. and p.m. schedule. Again, Year 7 and 8 parents please be aware that on their first test day, you will need to make return arrangements.

(iii) **Kingfisher bus – Reading West route**

As per arrangements for the Reading North and North East routes.

RETURNING TO SCHOOL – draft assessment and parents evening calendar

I would like to share with you below, our intended assessment and parents evenings (where applicable) calendar that we will be working to on our reopening. These dates are new dates because of lockdown. I will confirm these dates in next week's newsletter.

Year	Dates	Activity	Commentary
11	22/3/21 – 1/4/21	Mock series #2	These dates will allow time for marking and feedback leading into a few weeks after Easter holidays before the mini assessments that exam boards will release over the country.
	29/4/21	Parents evening	
9&10	19/4/21 – 30/4/21	Exams	

7	19/4/21 – 30/4/21	Online assessments for core subjects	Assessments will be marked online
8	30/3/21	Parents evening - aligned with GCSE Options evening	Will be moved from original date of 30 th March to term 6. New date TBC

RETURNING TO SCHOOL – GCSE GRADES 2021

As with the reopening of school and testing programme, we will take our time to decide on the best course of action to allocate grades and share a draft with you **as soon as all exam boards reveal the details** of what evidence can be submitted by schools. In the interim, it will be lessons and mock exams as normal.

RETURNING TO SCHOOL – safety steps in school

“Staff, pupils and students in secondary schools, colleges and universities are advised to wear face coverings in all indoor areas where social distancing can’t be maintained, as an extra precaution including classrooms”

(DfE 23rd February 2021)

In addition to testing, schools are required to continue with the promotion of social distancing practices. To that end, I have included below our safety steps that we had in place from September to December. **You will be very familiar with these.** I will be reminding pupils in assemblies on their first day back.

On the matter of the above **advice regarding facial coverings from the DfE**, we had already adopted a practice upon return in September that facial covering should be worn in classrooms where a social distance of 1 metre plus, cannot be maintained.

Key safety steps – IN THE CLASSROOM

(i) Teaching Zone

Each classroom will have a floor marking of 2 metre distance between the teacher whiteboard and the first pupil seating area. This provides a designated space for teachers to retreat to after visiting pupil tables for example. The girls will not to enter this space unless asked to do so.

(ii) Sanitising stations

I’m sure we are all well aware of the importance of washing/sanitising our hands. Every classroom will have a sanitising station that the girls will use on entry to and exit from the classroom. They can also use this during the lesson if and when needed.

(iii) 1 metre pupil desks

A key part of our teaching & learning strategy is active pair and/or group work. We want this to continue. Therefore, seats that face each other will be positioned at least 1 metre apart across the table.

(iv) Facial coverings***General movement around the school***

All staff, students and visitors are required to wear facial coverings when travelling around the school and in communal areas. This eliminates the need for a one-way system around the school.

Dining areas

Facial coverings can be removed when seated in each of the designated year group dining areas. This is because pupils are normally in consistent groups i.e. friendship groups within year groups.

In lessons

Where social distancing of 1 metre plus, between pupils and pupils and teachers cannot be maintained, facial covering will be required.

Where pupils arrive at school without facial coverings, we will contact parents and ask that parents either bring the facial covering to school or pupils can go home to collect them. In emergency circumstances, we will of course provide one where needed.

(v) Art, Dance, Food Technology, ICT, PE & Science

These lessons will continue as normal. All equipment used in these subjects will be cleaned before and after use. Again, the KEY SAFETY STEP to try to keep as safe as possible will be frequent washing and sanitisation of hands.

In PE and Dance in particular, the departments may amend their scheme of work for the start of the year to support social distancing and safe practice where possible.

(vi) Dance & PE uniform

On the days that pupils have PE and/or dance, they are to wear their PE uniform instead of their school uniform. Girls arriving in PE/Dance uniform not in line with our policy, will spend the day in our IER unless parents can bring the correct uniform into school.

Can I remind you please of the PE/Dance uniform:

KS3 (Yr7/8) PE & DANCE

- Sky blue polo neck t-shirt
- Navy leggings or navy jogging bottoms
- Optional: Navy jumper/hoodie
- Socks & trainers (PE)
- Bare feet or ballet slippers (Dance)

KS4 (Yr9/10/11) HEALTH & FITNESS

- Sky blue polo neck t-shirt or Sky blue 'Health & Fitness' t-shirt
- Navy leggings or navy jogging bottoms
- Optional: Navy 'Health & Fitness' hoodie
- Socks & trainers

KS4 (Yr9/10/11) PERFORMING ARTS

- Navy 'Performing Arts' t-shirt
- Navy leggings
- Bare feet or ballet slippers

(vii) Subject specific safety steps

In the same way that the Government have wisely given school the flexibility to adapt their guidance to individual school settings, beyond the significant safety steps above, I have also told Subject Leads that I am happy for them to adjust according to the nature of their subject. One example will be marking. Some subjects will continue marking books whilst others might ask pupils to submit work electronically.

Key safety steps – OUTSIDE OF THE CLASSROOM

Whilst it may be easier to manage safety easier in the classroom, it will clearly be somewhat more challenging to do that outside of the classroom. Again, we have identified key safety steps to strike the balance between being sensible and enjoying school. The reason for these safety steps will be to prevent possible cross-contamination. None of these safety steps are intended to be punitive. Rather, it's a matter of safety first and I would welcome your support in helping us relay that message to the girls.

(viii) Entrance and exit points to the school building for pupils

Similar to the designated social areas for year groups, we will aim to manage numbers by allocating specific entry and exit points to the school for all of our girls.

- Year 7 – Entrance via main reception to the canteen
- Year 8 – Normal entrance via PE field to the main hall
- Year – 9 Entrance via main car park sports pitches to the Year 9 Bistro
- Year 10 – Entrance via main car park sports pitches to the Year 10 Bistro
- Year 11 – normal entrance via PE field to the library

(ix) Movement around the school - 'walk on the left'

We will ensure that we all respectfully adhere to our current system of walking on the left around the school.

(x) Movement on the staircases

Time of day / Staircase	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
Before school, after break, after lunch	Up staircase by reception at 8.25am	Up central staircase by canteen at 8.25am	Up central canteen staircase	Up back staircase by year 10 area	Up back staircase by sportshall
After school, before break, before lunch	All year groups down the nearest staircase				
Lesson change over: P1-2, P3-4, P5-6	All Year groups travel up the central stairs by reception and the canteen and down the back staircases				

(xi) Designated year group social areas - before school and during break and lunch

Year group	Designated indoor year group area	Designated outdoor year group area
Year 7	Main hall	Picnic benches & canteen cover area
Year 8	Canteen	Picnic benches outside main hall
Year 9	New dining room	Car park sports pitches & picnic benches by mugar
Year 10	Current Bistro	Dining tables at back of school
Year 11	Library area	New outdoor covered area and picnic benches closest to field

(xii) Use of the MUGAR during break/lunch

This area is mainly used by Year 7 and 8. Year 7 have been given the main school lockers and the school canteen as their dining area. We will therefore give year 8 the extra day access to the MUGAR. The older year groups have their own areas.

- Year 7 – Mondays, Wednesdays
- Year 8 – Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays

(xiii) Queuing safely to buy food

You will know that our break and lunchtime is 10.30-10.50am and 12.50-1.20pm respectively. We will not be creating more than one break and lunch period. However, we will operate a programme where the girls will leave lessons a little earlier than normal so that we can reduce the number of girls queuing at one time. There will also be 1 metre floor markings to maintain social distancing where possible.

Year group	Break time (a.m.)	Lunch time (p.m.)
Year 7	10.20 – 10.45	12.40 – 1.15
Year 8	10.25 – 10.45	12.45 – 1.15
Year 9	10.25 – 10.50	12.45 – 1.20
Year 10	10.30 – 10.50	12.50 – 1.20
Year 11	10.30 – 10.50	12.50 – 1.20

Year 7 and 8 teachers will escort their classes to the Year group area at the beginning of break and lunch times.

(xiv) Access to floors 1 & 2 during break/lunch times (amendment)

There is no access to floors 1 & 2 during break/lunch times except for:

- (i) those using Year 9 toilets on the Maths and /or English corridor
- (ii) A designated group of Year 7 who can use room A103 on wet-weather days

(xv) Staggered times to end of the day

To reduce volume of movement at the same time around the school, we will deploy staggered end times to the school day. Pupils will be required to leave the site at their designated time and not hang around waiting for friends/family. Pupils who take the school bus home, will be required to go straight to the car park.

Year 7 and 8 teachers will escort classes to their exit points at the end of the day to ensure that they leave the site because pupils have been waiting around the building which defeats the purpose of staggered times to the end of the day.

Year group	End of the day
Year 7	3.10pm
Year 8	3.15pm
Year 9	3.20pm
Year 10	3.20pm
Year 11	3.20pm

(xvi) Paying for food at break and lunch

You will be aware that we are a cashless school and that the girls use biometrics to pay for their meals. Again, to reduce the potential of contamination, we will be issuing I.D cards to the girls to use to pay for food that they buy at the canteen

(xvii) Lockers (amendment)

We have allocated lockers in the following way...

Year group	Locker location
Year 7	Ground floor
Year 8	Coat rails in Main hall
Year 9	Year 9 dining area
Year 10	Ground floor
Year 11	Year 11 dining area

(xviii) Year group allocated toilet areas (amendment)

We will allocate designated toilets to specific year groups. It will be very important that the girls support our request on this.

- Year 7 – ground floor Food Tech toilets
- Year 8 – ground floor Pastoral office toilets
- Year 9 – floor 1 English & Maths corridor pupil toilets
- Year 10 – ground floor Bistro toilets
- Year 11 – ground floor Library & Sportshall area toilets

(xix) The Library – borrowing books

The girls will be able to borrow books from the library through a 'click & collect' service. This service is operated by Millie Ward of Year 8.

(xx) First Aid room

Our First Aid room will be relocated to the front of the school by reception. There is strong guidance to support this plan to ensure that pupils who feel ill are safely cared for in an isolated area.

(xxi) Water stations

Each water station around the school will have a floor markings to indicate to pupils where to stand if queuing to fill water bottles. Pupils are also required to sanitise hands before using the water stations. Sanitisers will be placed at water stations.

(xxii) School bus service

Our school bus service will continue as planned. It will not be possible to sustain social distancing therefore as with public transport, the girls will be required to wear face coverings for their journey to and from school.

(xxiii) Classroom windows

All classroom windows will be open during lesson time. This is to ensure good air circulation. Our heating will automatically be activated once temperature drops. I am not expecting it to be such that coats are needed. Rather, it may be sensible for girls wear under garments if needed.

(xxiv) Year 11 break & lunch (amendment)

The slight conundrum is the location of the library which is Year 11's base and the need to travel a bit further to get to lessons. Therefore, we would like year 11 to begin to leave the library area when they hear the announcement for year 7 & 8. That way, they will get to lesson on time rather than just be leaving the library at that time.