

01 March 2021

Dear Parent/ Carer

Following my letter last week, I can now share with you the arrangements for re-opening from Monday 8 March.

We are delighted to be able to welcome our students back into the building and we are keen to do this as quickly and safely as possible. Schools have been given the opportunity to do this in a flexible way to complete the first round of testing of all students before they return to classes. A brief overview of the timetable is as follows:

	Appointments for Testing (Round 1)	Return to school	Testing Round 2 and 3
Year 11	Friday 5 th March (am)	Monday 8 th March 8.25am	The remaining tests will be conducted within the school day
Year 10	Monday 8 th March (pm)	Tuesday 9 th March 8.15am	
Year 9	Tuesday 9 th March (am)	Wednesday 10 th March 8.25am	
Year 8	Monday 8 th March (am)	Tuesday 9 th March 8.25am	
Year 7	Wednesday 10 th March (am)	Thursday 11 th March 8.15am	
Appointment slots for Testing round 1 for each year group are contained in the attached guidance.			

The children that have been attending school throughout lockdown will be tested on **Friday 5 March** whilst they are in school and will continue to attend school from **Monday 8 March** as they have been doing since early January. The timings of the school day will revert to the staggered times that operated throughout the autumn term. Remote learning will continue until students return to the classroom.

We have created the attached guide, which we hope answers all of your questions, however please feel free to contact the school should you need further information.

Testing for COVID-19 in school (Lateral flow testing)

For us to successfully open it is essential that we can test as many students as possible. Whilst participation in the testing programme is voluntary, full participation will significantly help to reduce the number of students being asked to isolate in the future. Along with other protective measures we are taking, these tests will help staff and students to remain in school safely.

Up to one third of people who have coronavirus experience no symptoms. Keeping the virus under control is the only way we can see an end to the restrictions we are currently living under. If you have not already completed the consent form please use this link: <https://bit.ly/3qZqPw8>. Please complete the consent form by **Thursday 4 March** by 3pm.

Attendance at school is mandatory, as set out in government guidance. This will be staggered for year groups from Monday 8 March when attendance will be monitored through the usual school processes.

Uniform Expectations

We will be expecting full school uniform upon return. PE kit will no longer need to be worn to and from school, as students will be expected to change into their PE kit during their timetabled lesson.

The announcement by the Prime Minister offers some hope of a gradual return to life without restrictions and we cannot wait to welcome our students back into school. We will continue to communicate information updates as we receive them and please be assured that we are doing everything we can to support your child through this challenging time. I know many are looking forward to being back but for some this may feel overwhelming. Please be assured we are taking a cautious and stepped approach to help our students feel as safe as possible.

We fully understand how concerned some of you must be feeling about the current situation but I can reassure you that we are doing all we can to keep our school as safe as possible for your child. Our full risk assessment and guidelines are available on our school website.

Please contact us if you need this information in any other language or format if you have any questions. You can contact the office by email on info@bircheshead.org.uk.

Yours Sincerely

Ms K Dixon

