



**Bexley Grammar School**  
Danson Lane, Welling, Kent, DA16 2BL  
A Specialist Language College and  
IB World School  
Tel: 020 8304 8538

Headteacher: Mr S C Elphick

e-mail: [enquiries@bexleygs.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@bexleygs.co.uk)

02 March 2021

## **Important: Covid Testing and full return to school arrangements**

Dear Parent/Carer,

I could have written almost daily over the past week or so as guidance has been published and subsequent detail has been added. It is a challenge to maintain a balance between overloading you with information which is subject to change and providing enough information for you to plan.

Top of the list: It remains vital that if your child displays any symptoms of Coronavirus ([coronavirus \(COVID-19\) symptoms](#)) **you do not send her/him to school** ([COVID-19: guidance for households with possible coronavirus infection](#)). It is a parental responsibility, even for those of you with sixth form students, that you do not allow your child to enter the school with symptoms. If you are unsure, err on the side of caution and get your child tested as soon as possible.

### **Mass Testing**

Thank you for your prompt response to my letter a week ago regarding consent for the mass testing. Schools are required to test all staff and students who give consent from 8th March before they return to the classroom and then twice more within 3-5 days, after which those students (and staff) will be provided with home testing kits to use twice per week. The draft plan I sent out last week has become the final plan:

<i>Staggered return of year groups to school for Test 1 after which they go home.</i>			
<b>Pre-return-to-school test day</b>	<b>Year groups invited for test 1 (some remote learning work set)</b>	<b>Year groups in lessons in school</b>	<b>Year groups having remote lessons</b>
Monday 8th March	13, 12, 11	None	10, 9, 8, 7
Tuesday 9th March	10, 8	13, 12, 11,	9, 7
Wednesday 10th March	9, 7	13, 12, 11, 10, 8	None
Thursday 11th March	Rota for Test 2 begins	13, 12, 11, 10, 9, 8, 7	None

Because of the logistics involved in testing such large numbers while preserving social distancing, **students are being invited into school for their first, pre-return-to-school test and will then return home that day. Students should attend for testing in their school uniform.** (Some work will still be set remotely

for the day but they will not be expected to follow their timetabled lessons on that first testing day.) Their first day back in school for lessons will then be the following day, if their test result is negative.

The second and third tests (each 3-5 days after the previous test) will be arranged during the school day from lessons, similar to the way we organise school photographs, for example, and the process should be complete by Thursday 18th March, after which students will be issued with home-testing kits for twice-weekly tests (more details to follow when we have them).

Those taking the test will do their own swab test, supervised by trained staff. The 'lateral flow' tests are quick and easy, using a swab of your nose and throat. The "How to do your test" leaflet previously sent is attached again for ease of reference. You will receive the test result by email/text following the registration process (see below). **The school will only contact you directly if the test is positive.**

Most importantly, **please read the attached document detailing what time your child is expected in school for Test 1.** The table above shows which day but we have to manage queuing carefully to ensure social distancing; the attached document gives detailed instructions on when and where to arrive to make this massive logistical exercise possible.

The logistics of physically managing the tests in school are one matter. The logistics of registering hundreds of students to unique test kits with a barcode using online NHS systems are another!

### ***Registering each test***

We will send more detailed information on how parents/students will register for testing in due course. In summary, you will be asked to register a unique barcode for your child for each test online and provide information similar to that which you provided in giving consent. This registration can be done up to (but not more than) 24 hours before the test. We plan, therefore, to email each parent/sixth form student the day before with the necessary information so that you can register the evening before the student is due to take the test. I repeat - you will receive more information on this process and on receiving results, etc. in due course.

### ***Full return to school***

We will be returning to the staggered timetable we used during the autumn term from 8th March for lessons both in school and at home. Students should have their quick reference guides and timetables from the autumn term but just as a reminder, these are the staggered starts and finish times and where they should enter the school:

STUDENT START/FINISH TIMES AND ENTRANCE/EXITS			
Year Group	Start	Finish	Entrance/Exit
7	8.50am	3.10pm	Pedestrian Gate
8	8.50am	3.10pm	Canteen Gate
9	8.40am	3.20pm	Pedestrian Gate
10	8.40am	3.20pm	Canteen Gate
11	8.30am	3.30pm	Pedestrian Gate
12	8.40am	3.20pm	Reception Gate
13	8.30am	3.30pm	Reception Gate

The day after their first test, students will return to school. On Tuesday and Wednesday of the first week, some year groups will be testing, some will be back in lessons in school and some will have remote learning at home. Inevitably, there will be disruption to learning during this first week back and this will continue for the second week until students have been tested three times but we are working hard to keep this to a minimum and your support in ensuring your child is in the right place at the right time for their first test will contribute to our success.

### **Face coverings**

Everything else returns to the 'normal' of the autumn term except that the new guidance is that students should wear face coverings in classrooms, in addition to wearing them in communal spaces inside the buildings. The guidance expects everyone to wear a face covering inside buildings where social distancing of 2 metres cannot be maintained. Students in lessons, in most cases, will therefore be expected to wear face coverings. From next week, students may only take their face coverings off when they are outside. Could I add a plea from last term at this point? Please ensure your child has more than one reusable face covering so that each day your child is suitably equipped each day, perhaps with an emergency spare disposable mask? At one point last term we were having to hand out more than 50 disposable face masks a day(!), environmentally disappointing as well as very costly.

### **Summary**

We are trying to offer clarity in communicating a complex, full return to school. The more information we give, the more questions are potentially raised. Could I therefore ask that you try to be patient and resist the urge to email or phone with enquiries about mass testing, particularly the registration process? More information is coming and it will all come together and make sense in the end.

- Check the **attached document** for details of when to send your child into school for their first test and for their first day of school.
- Ensure your child is familiar with the **'How to do your test'** document.
- Ensure your child reverts, from Monday 8th March, to the 'old' staggered timetable from before Christmas.
- Ensure your child is equipped with a reusable face covering and perhaps an emergency spare and that they understand that they must wear a face covering in buildings at all times, including in lessons.

Thank you, as ever, for your support as we pull all this together to keep your children safe and get them back into school where we want them to be and where they need to be.

Best wishes,



Steve Elphick