

John Colet School  
**Reopening of School - March 2021**  
**Parent and Student Q&A**

The arrangements for reopening the school from 8 March following the national lockdown are set out in the [Headteacher's letter of 26 February](#). The questions below have been received in response to this letter.

**Emails sent to [office@johncolet.co.uk](mailto:office@johncolet.co.uk) on 04.03.21**

Please see below confirmation of X's positive test result. NHS track and trace have advised us that X can still test positive up to 90 days so shouldn't have the lateral flow test. Can you please advise JCS position on this?

For those students and staff who have been in the same position since January we have not had positive results from the lateral flow tests. However, it is perfectly reasonable to follow the NHS advice and withdraw consent for the lateral flow testing in school so that we do not call X for tests 1, 2 or 3.

**Emails sent to [office@johncolet.co.uk](mailto:office@johncolet.co.uk) on 02.03.21**

What will happen if a parent refuses for their child to wear a mask?

Wearing a face mask for many hours is clearly uncomfortable, but in the weeks leading up to the Easter holiday they are compulsory for those without a medical exemption when social distancing is not possible as set out in the DfE [Operational Guidance](#). The reason is to reduce the risk of transmission of the virus and so we need all members of staff and students to follow this requirement. Members of staff will use the C system for students who refuse to follow instructions and those who show persistent defiance would face higher level consequences as set out in the [Behaviour Policy](#). It is hoped that this will not be necessary as we are trying collectively to ensure virus transmission is controlled to such an extent that restrictions can be lifted sooner rather than later.

**Emails sent to [office@johncolet.co.uk](mailto:office@johncolet.co.uk) on 01.03.21**

I am very alarmed by the government's 'requirement' that secondary school children wear masks in lessons. ...

In conclusion: there is strong scientific evidence that mask wearing for extended periods by children/adolescents is extremely damaging to their health in many ways; masks have been proven to be ineffective in protecting against Covid; children are not 'super spreaders', countering the argument of teaching unions that teachers are at higher risk of contracting Covid from their students. ...

All of this points to the fact that masks do not belong in schools. I do hope you will give serious consideration to my major concerns with the government's guideline. It is not a legal requirement and appears to appease teaching union demands at the expense of our children's well-being.

The [Operational Guidance](#) provided for schools by the Department of Education on p7 the school 'must always ... ensure face coverings are used in recommended circumstances' and then later on p11 '... we recommend that face coverings should be worn by adults and pupils when moving around the premises, outside of classrooms, such as in corridors and communal areas where social distancing cannot easily be maintained. Face coverings do not need to be worn by pupils when outdoors on the premises.' This recommendation is in place until the end of this term and so the school will seek to comply.

## Prevention

### You must always:

- 1) Minimise contact with individuals who are required to self-isolate by ensuring they do not attend the school.
- 2) Ensure face coverings are used in recommended circumstances.
- 3) Ensure everyone is advised to clean their hands thoroughly and more often than usual.
- 4) Ensure good respiratory hygiene for everyone by promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach.
- 5) Maintain enhanced cleaning, including cleaning frequently touched surfaces often, using standard products such as detergents.
- 6) Consider how to minimise contact across the site and maintain social distancing wherever possible.
- 7) Keep occupied spaces well ventilated.

## 2. Ensure face coverings are used in recommended circumstances

Where pupils in year 7 (which would be children who were aged 11 on 31 August 2020) and above are educated, we recommend that face coverings should be worn by adults and pupils when moving around the premises, outside of classrooms, such as in corridors and communal areas where social distancing cannot easily be maintained. Face coverings do not need to be worn by pupils when outdoors on the premises.

In addition, we now also recommend in those schools, that face coverings should be worn in classrooms or during activities unless social distancing can be maintained. This does not apply in situations where wearing a face covering would impact on the ability to take part in exercise or strenuous activity, for example in PE lessons.

Regarding point 23 and the wearing of face coverings 'Staff and students will wear face coverings when inside the buildings with the exception of PE until the end of term'. My understanding is that the wearing of masks is not mandatory and issued as a 'recommendation'. I have some very strong views regarding my child wearing a face covering ALL DAY and I cannot see how this can be maintained in a hygienic manner. I firmly believe that masks cause risks to health (bacterial infections), increase infection spread (touching mask, nose and mouth), bullying and shaming, dermatitis and acne, vision issues (glasses steaming/ infections), mental health (anxiety) and the most obvious communication issues. Can you please therefore advise how I opt my daughter out of mask wearing even though she is not medically exempt.

Please see above for the reason for insisting on a face mask in lessons. Students may not opt out of this requirement until the end of term without a medical reason and therefore will be required to wear masks in line with the [operational guidance](#) set out by the DfE.

Do we know if children will be given an appointment for lateral tests?

An email will go out on Tuesday or Wednesday of this week to indicate the time slot for Test 1. Tests 2 and 3 will be carried out during normal school hours.

**Emails sent to [office@johncolet.co.uk](mailto:office@johncolet.co.uk) on 26.02.21**

Will VCW students need to wear full school uniform from the 8th March?

Yes

Will students be allowed to wear PE Kits to school on PE days?

No. Normal school uniform every day. Students should bring in their PE kit for days when they have Core PE.

Will the students be conducting their own lateral flow tests in school?

Under supervision students will swab their own throat and nose, then the swab will be taken for testing by a member of staff or volunteer.

Will the volunteers be tested?

Yes, just as members of staff are who have been conducting tests since January.

Will the volunteers have a DBS?

This will not be necessary as there will be a DBS-checked member of staff on duty at all times.

As a family we all tested positive for covid 19 in January. Myself and my husband both work in the NHS and are unable to use our lateral flow tests for 90 days after a positive PCR test Result as they may give a false positive result. Is this the same for the school lateral flow tests?

So far this has not been a significant issue in school. Staff or students who have had Covid-19 have reported the same advice from the NHS, but they have not tested positive using the lateral flow tests. It would be better to carry on with the school lateral flow tests and then consider a course of action if there is a positive result.

Mr X was annoyed to receive our email saying that the year 7 students will not be back in school full time from the 8th March - he said that was the Government's guidelines and that is what he had been working towards. The family have arranged to go back to work and made arrangements in view of the fact that the Government have said ALL kids back to school on the 8th March.

The [Operational Guidance](#) provided for schools by the Department of Education states on p30 that secondary schools are to undertake lateral flow testing for students before they return to school and should arrange for this testing to be carried out from 8 March. All students will be back in school the day after a negative test has been confirmed, but this has to be staggered over the week. The document also states that priority should be given to Years 10-13.

## **Secondary school testing on-site through an Asymptomatic Testing Site (ATS)**

Secondary schools should offer pupils testing at an on-site ATS from 8 March. Testing and return of pupils can be phased during the first week to manage the number of pupils passing through the test site at any one time. You should offer 3 tests, 3 to 5 days apart.

You have the flexibility to consider how best to deliver testing on a phased basis from 8 March, depending on your circumstances and local arrangements, but you should prioritise vulnerable children and children of critical workers, and year groups 10 to 13.

Pupils should return to face-to-face education following their first negative test result. Pupils not undergoing testing should attend school in line with your phased return arrangements. Schools will have discretion on how to test students over that week as they return to the classroom.

What happens if I don't wish for my daughter to be tested?

If consent is not given then the school will not call a student to be tested. The school will also not be in a position to provide home self-testing kits for those students who do not complete the three tests in school.