

24 February 2021



# Saffron Walden County High School

Saffron Academy Trust

Audley End Road  
Saffron Walden  
CB11 4UH

Telephone: (01799) 513 030  
email: [info@swchs.net](mailto:info@swchs.net)  
web: [www.swchs.net](http://www.swchs.net)

Executive Headteacher:  
Ms Caroline Derbyshire MA (Cantab)

Headteacher:  
Ms Polly Lankester MA (Cantab)

Dear Parents and Carers,

We have now had further guidance from the Department for Education and so we are able to share with you our plans for the full return of students from March 8<sup>th</sup>. The guidance makes it clear that we should stagger the return of students to allow for testing, ensuring all students can be back in the building by the end of that week. This letter sets out the timetable for the return of students to SWCHS and also gives some key safety information. Please read it carefully and discuss it with your child.

### Testing prior to returning to school

All students are strongly encouraged to take part in the testing programme. Lateral Flow tests will help us to identify asymptomatic cases and ensure that those affected self-isolate to help keep the school and wider community safer and reduce the risk of disruption to in-school education.

The current guidance is that all students should take 3 supervised tests in school, before then moving to a system of self-testing at home, supervised by parents. The first in-school test should take place before students come into school, with the second test being taken 3-5 days later and the final test taking place 3-5 days after the second.

The testing programme has been running very successfully in school for the last half term. The self-administered test is both quick and efficient and is overseen by our lovely team of friendly and trained parent volunteers.

We are already holding consents for the majority of the school community following our letter in December. If you have not already completed a consent form for your child, please follow the link below and complete this by 2pm on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> March. Please also see attached the privacy statement detailing how testing data is shared with the NHS. If at any time you wish to withdraw your consent for testing please email Mrs Adelle Priest at [assistantpa@swchs.net](mailto:assistantpa@swchs.net)

[Click here to complete the online consent form](#)

### Dates and timings of first tests and return to school for each year group

To allow the first tests to take place before each year group returns, we will be running the following timetable for return to school.



Year Group	Date of first test (students must only attend to take their test and then leave the site immediately on this date)	Date of full return to school
Year 13	Monday 8 <sup>th</sup> March (morning)	Tuesday 9 <sup>th</sup> March
Year 12	Tuesday 9 <sup>th</sup> March (morning)	Wednesday 10 <sup>th</sup> March
Year 11	Monday 8 <sup>th</sup> March (afternoon)	Tuesday 9 <sup>th</sup> March
Year 10	Tuesday 9 <sup>th</sup> March (afternoon)	Wednesday 10 <sup>th</sup> March
Year 9	Wednesday 10 <sup>th</sup> March (morning)	Thursday 11 <sup>th</sup> March
Year 8	Wednesday 10 <sup>th</sup> March (afternoon)	Thursday 11 <sup>th</sup> March
Year 7 (S side)	Wednesday 10 <sup>th</sup> March 3.30pm-5pm	Friday 12 <sup>th</sup> March
Year 7 (W side)	Thursday 11 <sup>th</sup> March 3.30pm-5pm	Friday 12 <sup>th</sup> March

We will send a further letter with instructions and more precise timings for these first tests next week. On the day of their first test, students may only come into school for the short period required for the test to be taken and should then go straight home.

The second tests will start from Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> March and will take place during the school day. After each test, your child will be given a card to take home which will have a QR code and a barcode on it. They will also have written instructions on how to register the test so that you receive the result from the NHS service. In order to access this service, each test must be registered within 24 hours. In the event of a positive test students will need to self-isolate and their close contacts will be traced.

We will issue more information about home testing nearer the time.

### Remote Education in the week beginning March 8<sup>th</sup>

Prior to the return date for your child, remote education will continue. The only exception will be that no work will be set during your child's year group's initial testing slot, as we do not want students to get behind or feel anxious.

After the return date for their year group, it is expected that students attend school in the usual way, with attendance being mandatory. Remote education will cease, except for those needing to self-isolate owing to testing positive for Covid-19, or where a student has been identified as a close contact and is asked to self-isolate.

### Safety in School

Safety measures that were in place last term will remain in place. These include:

1. Ensuring that those with symptoms are not in school and that they seek a PCR test
2. Staggering of breaks, lunchtimes and the end of the school day
3. The zoning of the school and our eating outlets at break and lunchtimes
4. Additional cleaning, especially of high frequency touch points and toilets
5. The regular use of hand sanitiser or hand washing including at the start and end of each lesson, and the promotion of "catch it, bin it, kill it" approaches.
6. Ventilation of all spaces, in line with the guidance
7. A one-way system of movement around the school
8. Alterations to lesson activities, in line with the guidance

### New, additional safety measures

Our students responded really well to the measures in place last term and this helped to keep the school community safer. However, levels of the virus remain high and new variants are more transmissible and so it is vital that all students continue to be vigilant, especially around avoiding touching each other and sharing equipment etc.



We will also be bringing in additional safety measures as set out by the Department for Education:

1. Providing support and encouragement for students to be involved in the regular testing programme.
2. Requiring the wearing of face masks whilst inside the building (**this now includes in lessons**). **Please therefore make sure that your child has two masks** with them each day so that they can follow the guidance and replace any damp masks promptly. They should also have a plastic bag for the safe storage of reusable masks.

We are aware that some members of our community disagree with these measures. However, as these are set out by the government, please could you direct any complaints or Freedom of Information requests on these issues to the Department of Education and not to us here at school, as we are already stretched quite thinly, and we are not able to change these externally set rules.

### How can parents help?

As well as discussing the contents of this letter with your child and reminding them of the importance of following these rules and guidelines for the good of the school and wider community, it would help us if you could double check that they have their own bottle of hand sanitiser. Could we also ask you to check that your child knows how to put on and remove a facemask safely and also that they have a plastic bag to put their facemask in when they remove it for PE lessons, eating, and at the end of the day.

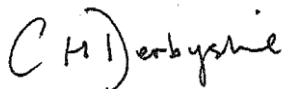
### Mental well-being

We hope that the spring weather and the news that they will soon be back to a more normal school experience and have further in-person contact with their friends will help our students to feel both calm and positive. It has been a long journey and there may still be bumps in the road ahead, but we have come such a long way and the vaccine programme should mean a return to a more normal way of life in the not too distant future. However, we are aware that the last 12 months have been difficult for many of our students. There has been considerable uncertainty and also worry about loved ones. If your child is feeling particularly vulnerable and might need some additional support and care on their return to school, please do let their Year Achievement Co-ordinator know.

We would also like to emphasise how well students have done keeping on top of their work whilst working from home. They have developed skills of independence and resilience which will help them in the future and they should feel proud of their achievements so far. Please encourage them to keep going for the next two weeks as they will then return to school having achieved a huge amount.

As always, thank you for your continuing support.

Best wishes,



**Ms C Derbyshire**  
Executive Headteacher



**& Ms Polly Lankester**  
Headteacher

