



# The Matthew Arnold School

Part of the Bourne Education Trust



Thursday 31<sup>st</sup> December

Dear Parents and Carers

## COVID-19 mass testing programme and the January return - update

I do hope you all managed to have a peaceful Christmas period. Since I wrote to you on Christmas Eve, there have been some further announcements from the government regarding the January return, and I am writing now to provide you with our plan for the return, including the mass testing of staff and students.

The good news about the government's revised proposals is that we are now back in line with the majority of secondary schools in terms of return to school dates; the only aspect we are not able to offer is onsite provision for vulnerable students or students who are the children of key workers until Monday 11<sup>th</sup> January.

### Timetable

January date	Event	Place
Mon 4 <sup>th</sup> - Wed 6 <sup>th</sup>	Remote lessons for year 11 students - timetable on website	
Thu 7 <sup>th</sup> - Fri 8 <sup>th</sup>	Testing of staff and initial tests for year 11 students, children of key workers and vulnerable students (by appointment)	Sports centre
Mon 11 <sup>th</sup> 08.40	Return to school for year 11 students, children of key workers and vulnerable students Second round of testing for these groups	New building Sports centre
Mon 11 <sup>th</sup> - Fri 15 <sup>th</sup>	Remote lessons for all other students - timetable to be published	
Mon 11 <sup>th</sup> - Fri 15 <sup>th</sup>	Initial tests for all other students (by appointment)	Sports centre
Mon 18 <sup>th</sup> 08.40 - 09.00	All students return to school - Second round of testing for these groups	New building Sports centre

### Testing information

**Please note: testing at school is only available to those without symptoms (asymptomatic). Anyone who has symptoms of COVID-19 should self-isolate and arrange for a PCR test through the [NHS](#).**

- All tests consist of swabs of the throat and nostrils
- They are processed using a lateral flow device (LFD) which gives a result within 30 minutes
- Staff and students carry out their own swabs, although assistance can be requested
- All other aspects of the test are administered and processed by trained staff and volunteers
- The testing site will be laid out according to government guidelines
- Every aspect of the testing will adhere to government requirements regarding sanitisation, PPE and waste disposal



- Anyone taking a test must wait for the results to be processed
- A positive lateral flow test would impose an immediate period of self-isolation during which a PCR (standard) test should be taken as quickly as possible

### Testing schedule

- The school collects consent from parents/carers for their children to participate in the programme
- Students are tested twice at the beginning of the school term with 3-5 days in between tests. We aim for the first test to be carried out before students return to school, by appointment. The second test will take place in the morning of their first day back in school where possible
- Staff are tested once, and then weekly until further notice
- From then on, any staff and/or students identified as being a contact of a confirmed case will be tested every day for the next 7 school days. They may continue to come to school as long as each test is negative
- Participation in any part of the programme is optional; no student or staff member will be turned away from school because they have not participated

Please find attached a [form](#) with three distinct sections:

1. Consent for your child to take part in the tests, or not
2. Your availability or willingness to volunteer time to assist with the testing process
3. Your employment status (if you are a key worker)

I would be grateful if all parents could fill this [form](#) out. Where parents have more than one child at the school, please fill out a separate form per child.

As always, please bear in mind how quickly the national situation can change. We should all be prepared for further changes, however last-minute they may be ...

Thank you again for your patience, and all my best wishes for a safe, happy and healthy New Year. As I have said to my staff, my sympathies to those of you who love to see in the New Year with a big splash - it will seem very quiet this time around. My thoughts also go to those who are far from their loved ones. May 2021 be the year that brings us back to normality!



Mary Gould  
Headteacher