



Parent and Student Guide to Returning to School in March

It is good to welcome our students back. It is only natural, however, for students and parents to be nervous or anxious about returning to school. Hopefully this guide will help answer any questions you have and provide you with clear information for your return to help ease any anxieties. Please also note the section on mental health and wellbeing support.

Parents and students should read and be aware of this information. It is in 2 parts:

1. Key information for returning to school
2. Frequently Asked Questions (and answers)

Part 1 – Key Information

Student Testing

- Testing is strongly encouraged but not compulsory. Students will have access to 3 tests on site and then will be provided with home testing kits.
- For their first test, Students should come in at their appointed test slot (students **do not need to wear school uniform for the first test**) and then leave as soon as their test has been done (this usually takes about 2-5 mins).
- Tests 2 and 3 will take place once students have returned to school.
- Testing dates:
 - o **Monday 8th March: Yrs 10 and 11**
 - o **Tuesday 9th March: Yrs 8 and 9**
 - o **Wednesday 10th March: Yr 7**
- If a student tests positive you should follow the Government [Guidance for Households with Possible or Confirmed Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#), which requires them to self-isolate for at least 10 days.

Parental Testing

The government has announced that households with primary school, secondary school and college age children, including childcare and support bubbles, can test themselves twice every week at home as schools return from Monday 8 March. Households, childcare and support bubbles of primary, secondary and college staff can also be tested. Twice-weekly testing will also be offered to adults working in the wider school community, including bus drivers and after school club leaders. The twice-weekly test kits can be accessed:

- via employers if they offer testing to employees

- at a local test site
- by collecting a home test kit from a test site
- by ordering a home test kit online

(please note that we do not provide these).

Return to School

- Students should return to school on the following dates:
 - **Tuesday 9th March: Yrs 10 and 11**
 - **Wednesday 10th March: Yrs 8 and 9**
 - **Thursday 11th March: yr 7**
- Students should be in school by 8.30am and go straight to their year bubble / form class upon arrival.
- Students should wear normal, full school uniform, except on days they have PE, when they should come to school in their full school PE kit.
- School buses should be running as normal (students will be required to wear face coverings when on the school buses)
- Please note that **Thursday 11th March is a reduced day** (students finish at 1.30pm) to facilitate the Year 11 Parents' Evening.

Face Coverings

- Face coverings should be worn (except for those medically exempt) in all corridors and communal indoor spaces.
- In classrooms, and in line with the government's guidance, face coverings, though not mandatory, are strongly recommended.
- The school has stocks of single use face coverings (free of charge) or reusable ones (£1 charge)
- Good face covering hygiene is important, This includes:
 - the safe wearing of the face covering,
 - the cleaning of hands before and after touching (including to put on/remove),
 - the need not to touch the front of the face covering during use or when removing it,
 - the safe storage of face coverings in individual sealable plastic bags between use,
 - the changing of the face covering should it become damp or damaged and to wash their hands again before heading to their classroom.
- Further information on face coverings in schools can be found at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/965446/Face coverings in education - March 2021.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/965446/Face_coverings_in_education_-_March_2021.pdf)
- Students will be reminded regularly of the importance of wearing face coverings safely.

Infection Controls in School

As during the autumn term, we have controls in place to help keep staff and students (and their families) safe. The following points show how students can play their part.

- Students will continue to be educated in their year bubbles.

- Anyone with symptoms should stay at home and self-isolate for at least 10 days.
- Close contacts of positive cases will be required to self-isolate for 10 days.
- Students are reminded to:
 - o Frequently wash their hands with soap and water.
 - o Clean their hands: upon arrival at the school/setting, after using the toilet, when returning after breaks, after changing rooms, before and after eating (including snacks), after blowing their nose, sneezing or coughing and before leaving the school/setting,
 - o Avoid touching their mouth, eyes and nose
 - o To use a tissue when coughing or sneezing, following the NHS 'Catch it, Bin it, Kill it' approach.
- When moving around the school and at social times students should try to maintain social distancing from all staff and students from different bubbles.
- Maintaining good ventilation in all classrooms.

Mental Health Support for Young People

Our staff have undergone specific training on supporting students' wellbeing as they return and we will be particularly vigilant of any issues. Please contact your child's Head of Year or Pastoral Support manager if you have any specific concerns. Our website also contains a wealth of information, advice, guidance and links for parents and students: <http://www.delasalle.st-helens.sch.uk/students/mental-health-and-wellbeing/>

In addition you may want to look at the following:

- Public Health online resources to promote and support mental wellbeing of children whilst learning at home. This includes [wider guidance on supporting children and young people's mental health](#)
- Digital support includes:
 - [An Educational Resource](#) for adults about children and young people's mental health.
 - The PHE [Every Mind Matters platform](#) about looking after your own mental health
 - [Rise Above](#), targeted at young people, which also has [schools-facing lesson plans](#).

Part 2 – Frequently Asked Questions (and answers)

In addition to the FAQ I sent out earlier this week, I promised to share any additional questions and answers that were sent in.

Q/ Should students continue to come into school in their PE kit on days they have PE?

A/ Yes, but they should only wear approved PE kit (details on the school website)

Q/ Do students have to wear uniform when they attend school for their initial test?

A/ No

Q/ Can students come into school without parental supervision for their COVID test?

A/ Yes, but they should return home straight afterwards until they receive their results.

Q/ If they have recently tested positive for COVID will they still be tested?

A/ No it is advised that anyone who has tested positive should not have a lateral flow test in school for 90 days.

Q/ Although the lateral flow test is optional, if they wish, can they test the first time at home? If they do, do they need to send the result into school?

A/ Many families already have access to testing at home. It is fine for families to test students at home through home test kits provided by employers etc. School only needs to be informed if a student tests positive.

Q/ Can students refuse to be tested even if their parents have given permission?

A/ Yes. No students will be forced to be tested.

Q/ If my child is a close contact of a positive case can they have daily testing instead of self-isolating?

A/ Sadly no, the government has moved away from that approach. All close contacts will be required to self-isolate.