

Dear Parents and Carers

Following the government's decision to re-open schools to students, I would like to provide you with details of students' return to Wyvern. First of all, my staff and I are very pleased that we will be working with your children in college again. We have missed them very much. We believe their return to college is vital for their educational progress, for their wellbeing, and for their wider development. However, we also recognise that many of you - and many students - will be nervous about their return. We are working very hard to ensure they return safely.

What are the risks of students returning now?

The government has produced a summary of the evidence that has led it to reopen schools. The full report can be found here

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/963639/DfE_Evidence_summary_COVID-19_-_children_young_people_and_education_settings.pdf

It shows that there has been a significant and sustained reduction in the rates of infection - this is true locally as well as nationally. The new variants of the virus are being contained and have not proved to lead to higher hospitalisation rates or infection rates for children as first feared. The government has met its vaccine targets and recent studies show that vaccines are effective in preventing people from spreading the virus as well as from becoming ill with it. The SAGE scientists have advised the government that if lockdown measures remain in place, it will be safe to open schools without reversing these improving trends.

No-one can promise us that there will be no risk of Covid transmission in schools, which is why we will continue to manage the risks, by implementing the full the range of protective measures - not just those that we have been using throughout the autumn term but also a new set of measures which have now become official government guidance to schools. Our measures fall into seven key strategies for combating Covid:

- Put in place effective testing and tracing: identifying early on asymptomatic cases and isolating them and those who have been in close contact with them.
- Reduce the number and duration of social contacts to the lowest level possible - through the use of class bubbles segregated by classing, rooming, break spaces and toilet facilities.
- Use of face coverings where students encounter others indoors and cannot socially distance. This now includes classrooms as well as corridors.
- Ensure ventilation of enclosed spaces to mitigate transmission via the air.
- Provide enhanced cleaning to mitigate transmission via surfaces.
- Implement effective hand and face hygiene to mitigate transmission via surfaces.
- Where possible, ensure social distancing can take place.

We have updated the Covid Contract - the list of safety measures that students should follow. I attach it here, highlighting in red those measures that we are now adding to it or which were added in the autumn term after the original contract was produced. We will be sharing this with students on their return but if your child is nervous about returning, it might be worth going through this with them. Please be reassured that while we will remind students of these measures we will only reprimand those who deliberately or repeatedly ignore them.

When exactly will my child need to be in college? Start dates and Testing

- We will be having a phased return, Students in years 10 and 11 will return to college on Monday 8th March. Students in years 7-9 will return on Tuesday 9th March.
- Before their return date, consenting students will need to come into college for a lateral flow Covid test. This will enable us to identify asymptomatic cases before the return of students to college. We do not have as much freedom as we would like to have in the timing of the testing, because students will need to have 3 tests, 3-5 days after the initial test, tests 2 and 3 will be on the days after students have returned.
- We will provide more detail of the testing early next week, but for now please be aware of the dates when your child will need to come into college be tested next week.

Test Days	1 st Test
Yr11 – am & Yr10 - pm	Wed 3 rd March
Yr9 – am & Yr8 - pm	Thurs 4 th March
Yr7 - am	Fri 5 th March

- We have the consent details for most children - if you recall we did this over the Christmas break! If you do not consent to your child being tested, they will be expected to return to College on Monday 8th March if they are in years 10-11 and Tuesday 9th March if they are in years 7-9.
- I am not underestimating the logistical challenge we face in testing our students three time 3-5 days apart: our sports' hall will be used as the testing centre and we will need to deploy a lot of staff and take up the kind offers of help from parent volunteers in order to be able to do this. If you wish to volunteer to help out with the testing, please do contact us through enquiries@wyvern.hants.sch.uk.
- Due to the addition of the mass testing, to the existing supervision of key worker children on site and teaching of students via TEAMS next week, there will be no TEAMS lessons on the day your child's year group will be mass tested. Instead, students will need to access work from the Foldr shared area. Similarly, there will no TEAMS lessons taking place on Monday 8th March but there will be Foldr work set.

Does my child have to return to college?

The government has made clear that attendance is compulsory. It has reinstated a parent's legal duty to ensure their child attends full time education and reinstated schools' responsibility to follow up unauthorised absences with the local authority. However, you should not send your child to college in any of the following circumstances and you won't be penalised for your child's absence in these circumstances:

- They are self-isolating because they have covid-19 symptoms. The main symptoms are: a high temperature; a loss or change to the sense of smell or taste; a new, continuous cough (this means coughing a lot for more than an hour or at least 3 coughing episodes in 24 hours).
- They have tested positive for covid-19 or live with someone who has.
- They live with someone who has covid-19 symptoms who is awaiting their Covid test result.
- In exceptional circumstances, a student may still be advised by their medical practitioner to remain at home and in these circumstances, the college will need to be given medical evidence such as a letter from a medical practitioner.

We do recognise though that some students and parents will still be nervous about the return to school. Please do get in touch with us if this is the case and we will explore how we can make your child feel even safer and discuss what support we can provide to overcome their anxiety.

Face Coverings

The new government guidance to schools recommends that where interactions less than 2m are necessary this should include correctly worn face coverings. Therefore, we now expect students to

wear a face covering in lessons and not just in corridors. Some children are exempt from wearing these for health or medical reasons and those with exemption passes or lanyards will not be expected to wear coverings. It is possible that in some lessons, your child will find that one of their classmates sat near them is not wearing a covering.

The use of face coverings needs to be safe and the advice we have is that it is not hygienic for students to wear the same mask for the whole day. They should have two coverings with them each day - one for the morning and one for the afternoon. The attached covid contract makes clear how students can make their use of coverings hygienic. Although face coverings to provide an additional means of minimising transmission, they do not prevent a student from being asked to self-isolate in the event of being a close contact with a person who has tested positive for Covid.

Uniform reminders for students return to College

- We expect all students to be wearing correct Wyvern College uniform, including black school shoes.
- Students should continue to wear layers underneath their uniform if the weather remains cold
- Students should bring a coat to wear - these will still be permitted in lessons if the weather remains cold
- On a PE or GCSE Dance practical day, students should wear their PE kit - blue sports leggings/plain tracksuits are allowed (not black) and a plain & logo-free blue or black sweatshirt is allowed
- Hoodies are not permitted at any time
- We recognise that some students may have outgrown uniform (including school shoes) and we ask parents, wherever possible to organise new items of uniform before the return to college - however, we also recognise the difficulties parents may face as non-essential shops remain closed. We ask parent to contact their child's tutor in the first instance if their child will be wearing an item of incorrect uniform so we can agree a timescale for sorting

Reporting positive cases of Covid to College

Finally, a quick reminder that if your child has Covid symptoms or has tested positive for Covid, please do contact us to inform us, using the welfare email: welfare@wyvern.hants.sch.uk

I hope this letter gives you some of the main information you need to help prepare your child for their return to college. We will be in touch again next week with further information, especially regarding the testing for each year group.

With best wishes to all our Wyvern families,
Mr Rule