

Orchard School Bristol

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Headteacher: Mrs Julia Hinchliffe **MA (Hons), MA, NPQH**

3 March 2021

Dear parents and carers

I hope you are well and looking forward to your children's return to school next week. I understand that some parents were unable to open last week's email attachment due to an error in permissions with our provider. This should now be rectified, but for your information all our letters are always put on our website too. I am now writing to provide further information about our return to school plans.

Attendance

Attendance is mandatory – which means that all students need to attend. The usual rules on school attendance apply, so if your child is unwell, please make sure you phone the absence line on 0117 377 2021, or email info@orchard.fila.school.

The exception to this is for any child who:

- is clinically extremely vulnerable and who is likely on the Shielding Patient List, which is agreed by doctors

or who is required to self-isolate because they:

- have Covid 19 symptoms or have had a positive test result
- live with someone who has symptoms or has tested positive and are a household contact
- are a close contact of someone who has coronavirus (COVID-19)

Uniform and Equipment

Students are expected back in full school uniform, bringing equipment as follows:

- School bag
- Pencil case with usual contents including pens, pencil, ruler, rubber, protractor, set of compasses
- Also, in the pencil case, the two items provided by school for all students – glue stick and whiteboard pen (replacements are available for free for these items only from student reception)
- Scientific calculator – CASIO FX 83 GTX or CASIO FX 85 GTX solar
- Student Planner
- Mask

Students should also expect PE to start as usual and bring their PE kit in on the right day. The usual timetable is being followed.



If your children have grown rapidly over lockdown and you are unable to pay for new uniform or equipment, please let your Pastoral Manager know as soon as possible. We have access to a Covid Fund where we hope we can purchase this for you.

Year 7 – nantigha@orchard.tila.school

Year 8 – dpiper@orchard.tila.school

Year 9 – ebhakerd@orchard.tila.school

Year 10 – tpointing@orchard.tila.school

Year 11 – please contact mgraffton@orchard.tila.school

Key Dates

All school starts at the usual times. Please make sure your son/daughter arrives punctually.

	Year 7, Year 8 and Year 11	Year 9 and Year 10
Monday 8 March	In school (Rapid Test 1)	At home – remote learning
Tuesday 9 March	At home – remote learning	In school (Rapid Test 1) Year 9 and 10 should return any borrowed laptops on this day
Weds 10 March	In school Years 7, 8 and 11 should return any borrowed laptops on this day (early finish with year group staggered exits around 2.20pm)	In school (early finish with year group staggered exits around 2.20pm)
Thurs 11 March	In school (Rapid Test 2)	In school
Friday 12 March	In school	In school (Rapid Test 2)
Monday 15 March	In school (Rapid Test 3)	In school
Tuesday 16 March	In school	In school (Rapid Test 3)

Rapid Testing

As you can see from the table above, we are staggering the entry of students on the first two days to support our Rapid Testing (Lateral Flow Testing). Testing will only be carried out where consent has been given by parent/carer. If you have NOT given consent, your child will NOT be tested.

If you would like to sign up your child and have not yet done so, you can complete the [Consent Form](#) . Please read the [Privacy Notice](#).

Testing is voluntary, and no child will be refused education for not engaging in lateral flow testing.

After Rapid Test 3, children who have been tested in school will be provided with Test 4 and a further Home Testing kit. Students with consent should continue to test twice a week – Monday and Thursday or Tuesday and Friday and look at their results at home. Full instructions are provided, but if you need any further help, the 119 telephone service is able to offer translation services in up to 650 languages, and can provide support for anyone who may need extra help with the instructions.

You should report their result (positive, negative or void) to NHS Test and Trace. There are two ways to report a result, either online by visiting www.gov.uk/report-covid19-result or by phoning 119 – lines are open every day, 7am to 11pm.

You MUST let the school know any positive results by emailing sbm@orchard.tila.school. If your child has a positive rapid (lateral flow) test, then they must NOT come into school, and instead get a free PCR test at a test site to confirm the result.

Risk Assessment

When there are over 1000 people on site in school at any one time, we have to risk assess very carefully. We have to protect others, and think about children, staff and families at home who are clinically vulnerable. We must avoid the spread of Covid 19, and we want everyone to have confidence in our procedures and know that the school is as safe as it can be.

The Whole School Risk Assessment that we already have in place remains largely unchanged following this return, however there is an important amendment in the use of face coverings (masks).

Face Coverings

We recognise that some people have strong feelings about the use of face coverings/masks for children and young people. We are aware that some parents dislike the use of masks. Other parents want the school to make masks mandatory with no exemptions. The majority of parents are somewhere in the middle, and the government guidance for schools fits this middle road best. I have taken an extract from the guidance below, but the summary is:

We know it is not possible inside the school for all our students to maintain 2 metres distance from others, and therefore we expect students and staff to wear masks inside in communal areas including classrooms (except for those students with an agreed exemption).

The government guidance, is as follows:

“Where pupils and students in year 7 and above are educated, we recommend that **face coverings should be worn by staff, pupils and students** 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 and students when outdoors on the premises.

In addition, **we now also recommend that in those settings where pupils and students in year 7 and above are educated, face coverings should be worn in classrooms** and 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.

It is vital that face coverings are worn correctly and that clear instructions are provided to staff, pupils and students on [how to put on, remove, store and dispose of face coverings](#) in all of the circumstances above, to avoid inadvertently increasing the risks of transmission.

Exemptions

Some individuals are exempt from wearing face coverings. This applies to individuals who:

- cannot put on, wear or remove a face covering because of a physical impairment or disability, illness or mental health difficulties
- speak to or provide help to someone who relies on lip reading, clear sound or facial expression to communicate.

The same exemptions should be applied in education settings, and we would expect teachers and other staff to be sensitive to those needs, noting that some people are less able to wear face coverings and that the reasons for this may not be visible to others.

The use of face coverings is one element of the wider safety measures schools and colleges have put in place. This is a temporary measure and will be reviewed at Easter, in partnership with health experts, to decide whether evidence suggests that these measures can be eased ahead of the summer term.

More information on our face covering guidance is available on [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk).

Behaviour Expectations

Part of our risk assessment also requires students to follow our village procedures. This means that students must remain within their own year group village, only use their year group toilets, keep distancing wherever possible, wash their hands/use hand sanitiser regularly through the day, keep to their seating plans, wear their mask properly inside, and follow staff instructions.

If students deliberately act in Covid unsafe ways, and fail to follow instructions, then this is very serious and will be treated as such in determining sanctions. Our policy includes fixed term and permanent exclusions, but we trust that with your support and clear reminders to students on return to school, these will not be necessary.

Gate

A reminder please to all parents that the staff car park will be fully in use from Monday 8th March and the gates are therefore back in use. Please **avoid** driving down Northwick Road, as residents are distressed by the increased traffic, unsafe parking and dangerous manoeuvres by drivers down this narrow residential road.

Assessments

Staff are putting in place opportunities over the next three weeks to see how much your children have learned over this recent lockdown period. Students in Years 7 to 10 will have been told about assessments either at home or when they get back into school. Every subject will be carrying out a straight-forward assessment which will help teachers see how much has been learned, and where any gaps are.

We know that when gaps occur, this can be for many reasons, and teachers need to know where to direct the support. We want your children to do their best, but please try not to let your children worry unduly about these assessments. We have catch up plans in place to support children to keep up where they might have fallen behind during lockdown. The assessments are aimed at supporting catch up.

Support in school

When students return to school, we know from the previous lockdown that some are likely to return feeling more anxious than they were previously. We are supporting staff to recognise and respond to anxiety appropriately and to signal extra social emotional and mental health support where needed.

All students will have an opportunity during this term to focus on their wellbeing in tutor times, and tutors have some excellent resources to use for this purpose. If you as parents/carers, are concerned about your children returning to school, please contact your Pastoral Manager.

Finally

This lockdown has been difficult on families, and many of us have experienced bereavement and stress as a result of Covid 19. It is a positive sign that the infection rate is now coming down so well. I very much hope there will be a sense of normality coming back for you soon, and this will start with the return to school for your children.

All the school staff are looking forward to welcoming your children back in school next week. It will be lovely for the school building to be fully in use again and to see your wonderful children enjoying being back learning with their friends again.

With best wishes



Julia Hinchliffe, Headteacher