



BORDEN GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Borden Grammar School
Avenue of Remembrance
Sittingbourne
ME10 4DB

3 March 2021

Dear Parent or Carer,

I apologise for the amount of communication coming your way at the moment. I am sincerely hoping that after the return to school things will revert to normal a little.

Covid Testing

You should have received the time that your child is expected to attend school for their first test. The government has asked that we run three tests in school before you start completing home tests. This means that we will be continuing to test in school up to 18th March. Providing we have received them by then, we are intending to provide students with their home test kits when they have had their third test. This is so that students get better at taking the test, which itself increases its accuracy. What we have noticed at school is that the first couple of times anyone takes the test is the worst, but it gets to be routine after. As I have said before, it benefits the whole community for students and staff to be tested regularly. Whilst we know that the LFD tests are not 100% accurate, it is actually very accurate for when viral loads are high and therefore most transmissible, and there is clear scientific data that shows that transmission is reduced the more people are tested.

The schedule for testing was sent out last week. In summary, we will be testing KS4 and 5 students on Thursday and Friday this week so that they can return to school on Monday 8 March. Year 8 and 9 will come in for an appointment on Tuesday and return to school Wednesday 10th. Year 7 will have a staggered start to school on Thursday. Since students are only 'visiting' school there is no requirement to wear uniform on this occasion, although year 7 will be staying after their test so will need to be in uniform. Please provide them with a warm coat as students may need to queue or wait outside depending on how well the testing goes on the day. If you wish to book a test in the community before your child's scheduled return date, that is acceptable, and we would be grateful if you could let us know that as well as emailing the results to the school at fftresults@bordengrammar.kent.sch.uk and also complete the Google form on our website home page under Announcements titled 'Student Test Results'.

Lessons

The above means that we will have to set remote (non live) or recorded lessons for the following year groups on the following days.

- Thursday 4th - Y12 and 10 (recorded/remote)
- Friday 5th - Y11 and 13 (recorded/remote)
- From Monday 8th to Thursday 11th, we will be moving back to the school normal timetable for those students in school, which means that we may be unable to deliver live lessons for KS3. Teachers will communicate with their classes to let them know what to expect.
- 6th form students from our partner schools will begin moving between schools from March 15th so will need remote lessons up to then

Masks

The government has strongly recommended that students wear masks anywhere inside the school building, and has asked us as a school to 'ensure' that this happens, to be reviewed at Easter. This is clearly intended to add to the system of controls we have put in place to make the school as safe as possible.



Headteacher: Mr A Tomlin MA NPQH

There is clear scientific evidence (supported by the WHO) that masks reduce transmission significantly in enclosed spaces. However, this evidence has the caveat that they are handled properly and so we will be talking to our students about this as soon as they return. I realise that there are some students who will be exempt for good reason, but that there will be a small number of parents or students who will not wish to wear masks for a variety of other reasons. Whilst I don't know anyone who likes wearing a mask, we have been asked to do it for good reason, so I would ask any parent or student to carefully consider the implications of taking this view. It has the potential to create anxiety for those who feel it is a necessary precaution, it makes managing the school community more difficult and potentially puts others at risk. That said, it sometimes becomes difficult for students to hear if teachers wear masks whilst teaching. Therefore, staff may well take their masks off to teach when they are socially distanced.

Year 11 and 13

Following the consultation outcome, we know that this year there will be a form of teacher assessment, built on a body of evidence and supported by exam board moderation. We are still waiting on more details and will write to parents in year 11 and 13 as soon as we know more and have had a chance to plan our response. One important point to make is that parents and students must not ask staff for predicted grades. Not only would this be futile, since the moderation process may significantly change any teacher grades, but it is also potentially a breach of examination rules which may have to be reported to the exam boards. Unfortunately, the only guarantee I can give to students or parents at this stage is that working hard from now until then will make a difference.

Wellbeing

We will very much be taking the approach of 'business as usual' once our young people have been tested and returned to the classroom. We have found that this is actually the best way to reduce anxiety and will allow us to try and spot where individuals may need some extra support. However, we are also aware that circumstances may have changed for many as a result of bereavement, illness or employment changes. If this applies, then please can you write to Ms Bateman at lbateman@bordengrammar.kent.sch.uk or the Head of Year and let them know of any information that may be important for us to support your child.

Hopefully, the need for all of these reminders and extra will reduce over the coming weeks and we can return to some sense of normality. We are all very much looking forward to our students returning and for Borden to become an active school full of young people again.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ashley Tomlin', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Ashley Tomlin
Headteacher