



BORDEN GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Borden Grammar School
Avenue of Remembrance
Sittingbourne
ME10 4DB

Dear Parent or Carer,

25 August 2021

I thought it might be helpful to summarise the Covid arrangements at Borden before our students return to school next week. As you will be aware, from the 16th August, much of the previous national Covid restrictions have been withdrawn and there is an expectation that schools will largely return to normal in September. This means,

- schools will no longer conduct 'Test and Trace' as they have previously done. The expectation is that the NHS will deal directly with any student testing positive and directly contact those impacted. It is worth noting that the rules now say that students under 18 years old no longer need to isolate if close contacts.
- a removal of 'bubbles' where students were permanently located in the same school area. Students will now move around the school to lessons, however will remain in the same year group areas for tutor time.
- a relaxation on some of the curriculum restrictions, particularly relevant for subjects such as music, drama and PE.
- a relaxation of the use of social areas, Students will now be able to mix across year groups in social times, use the main hall to eat, and change for PE in changing rooms (meaning there will be no more need for students to attend school in PE kit and should travel in school uniform)

However, we are also aware that it remains in all of our interests to try and reduce the opportunities for the virus to spread. We will therefore continue to,

- encourage students to regularly sanitise in and around the school
- ventilate indoor spaces as much as possible
- encourage students to be outside at social times unless there is poor weather
- have a split break and lunchtime to reduce the crowded nature of social spaces
- encourage students to test themselves at least twice weekly
- remind students to remain at home if they have any Covid symptoms
- recommend the use of masks in crowded areas (although this remains entirely voluntary)

As part of this return to normal, the Government has also required that schools Covid test all students twice, within 3 to 5 days, on their return from the summer break. I realise this may seem a little odd to many of you since all other restrictions have been relaxed and you will be testing regularly at home. However, the guidance clearly states that,

"Following the announcements on Step 4 this week, we are asking secondary schools and colleges to test all students at an on-site asymptomatic test site (ATS) on return following the summer holidays. This approach is based on the latest public health advice and will help us break chains of transmission in education settings after the summer holidays when students may have been mixing with lots of people. We are asking these tests to be carried out on site as testing participation rates amongst students via ATS are much higher than when testing at home."

Therefore the logic of doing this appears to be to try and create a 'safe' start to term and the guidance allows schools to stagger the return of students to facilitate this. Whilst I would rather this were not the case, our large spaces at Borden are smaller than most secondary schools, which necessitates the use of a staggered return.



Headteacher: Mr A Tomlin MA NPQH

I also appreciate that many of you may reasonably think that you could test at home and provide copies to the school. However, you can see from the above guidance that this is not what we are being asked to do, which is designed to maximise the interests of the majority. I apologise, once again, for having a slightly disrupted start to term. However, if the guidance proves to be correct, taking this thorough approach should help reduce the chances of disruption in the longer term.

We are all really looking forward to our students returning to school under more normal conditions and wish you the very best for the last few days of the school holiday.

Yours faithfully,

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

Ashley Tomlin
Headteacher