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Dear Parents and Carers

This has been a week of mixed emotions. However, I am delighted to see schools open from Monday 8th March and we will stagger the return over this period, as we have been advised, to enable students to undertake the Lateral Flow Test (LFT), before returning to the classroom.

Organising the LFT in line with the extensive guidance for schools and ensuring some form of normality for students in school, whilst following COVID-19 restrictions, presents a very significant logistical challenge. On a daily basis since January, over a two-hour period, we have tested approximately 60 staff and students. The task ahead of us is to undertake approximately 500 tests a day. Students are to be offered three tests, between three and five days apart, and thereafter are to be tested at home twice a week.

Like you, I understand why students need to be tested. However, the task set for us does not appear to have taken into consideration the nuances of school organisation or the pressure it will place on students and parents.

The number of variables in this are significant and dependent on each other. The guidance confirms that students cannot come back into the classroom environment until they have their first negative LFT. Once they have had their first negative test, they can remain in school and the second and third LFT can be managed within the school day. The upscaling of our testing regime relies on assembling a workforce of staff and volunteers to manage the testing, which presents another problem.

Notwithstanding all of this, I believe we can chart our way through this with your cooperation and forbearance. I want to see children back in school, learning as quickly as possible. A successful first LFT test is the key to unlocking this.

If you have not yet completed the LTF consent form, please complete this by **midday on Monday 1st March** (the early issue with the St Martin form groups has now been rectified).

[Please follow this link to complete the LFT permission form.](#)

We are also still calling for volunteers to help with the testing. If you can assist please complete **[this form.](#)**

The table below indicates which students will be tested over the first week and when students will return to full time school. Please note we intend to test Years 11,12 and 13 on Friday 5th March.

Year Group	Date of First Test	When Back in School	Date of Second Test	Date of Third Test
Year 11 Year 12 & 13	5 th March	8 th March	9 th March	12 th March
Year 10	8 th March	8 th March phased in through the day	11 th March	16 th March
Year 9	10 th March	10 th March phased in through the day	15 th March	18 th March
Year 8	10 th March	10 th March phased in through the day	15 th March	18 th March
Year 7	8 th March	8 th March phased in through the day	11 th March	16 th March

So that we can manage the workforce, some of whom are volunteers, the only way to organise the first LFT is to allocate time slots to students. Once students have taken the first test and received a negative result they can then return to lessons. The administration process and supervision of the test only takes a few minutes. Students then have to wait socially distanced for up to 30 minutes for the result to come through, after which time they will move to their classrooms (apart from Years 11, 12 and 13 who will come to school on Monday 8th March having already been tested on Friday 5th). Clearly this will result in a staggered arrival and return to lessons throughout the first day. For example, if your child is in 9 St Clare, they could be called into school for 10.20am on Wednesday 10th March, they would then take the test; on receipt of a negative result, they go to their lesson. A positive test would result in parents being contacted to collect their child, in line with previous guidance, and begin a 10-day isolation period.

I appreciate asking parents to arrange for students to be dropped off at school during the day is a significant ask, particularly where some of you may be required to bring children in different year groups on different days / times. I need to be clear though; if we can't comply with the guidance, opening the school to all students is jeopardised. We all have a part to play in the reopening of schools and you will appreciate from the scheduling of the second and third tests, we must complete the testing per year group as outlined. This is based on our capacity to test up to 500 students a day.

School and public service buses will run from Monday 8th March.

Throughout the process we will provide you with a progress update on our website. Early next week we will allocate the time slots and provide more detail including information about the home testing kits which will be used from the week commencing 15th March.

If your child has the symptoms of COVID-19, please do not send them into school to receive a Lateral Flow Test as this could result in a significant number of people having to isolate. You must follow the Government guidance and get a PCR test.

[Get a free NHS test to check if you have coronavirus - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

If your child has had COVID-19 in the last 90 days and you have not yet informed us of their positive test, please do so as soon as possible by emailing Provision@oaklandscatholicschool.org as they will not require a LFT.

Further information can be found following the links below
[open letter from the Secretary of State for Education to parents](#)
[what parents and carers need to know about early years providers, schools and colleges](#) and [parents and carers of children attending out-of-school settings during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) outbreak.](#)

Public Examinations

Yesterday the Government put out its response to the consultation on public exams. The focus remains on teacher assessment, using the evidence provided by students in their work. We have started work on the impact of this announcement. I will write to students and parents in Year 11 and Year 13 early next week to lay out our plans.

Year 11 Parents Evening, Thursday 11th March

Mr Bamford wrote to you on Tuesday about this (a copy of the letter can be found via [this link](#)). A number of parents had asked if two parents in different locations could join the calls. This wasn't possible until now, but the company have recently added this functionality, so if you access this [link](#) and scroll down the page, instructions are provided. Please contact Mr Bamford if you need any further assistance.

Year 11 present attainment grades and initial predicted grades were published to the SIMs App on Thursday this week.

Uniform Sale

The Oaklands Friends and Parents Association (OFPA) will be holding another nearly-new uniform sale to coincide with our return to school. If you need any items, please email your order by Thursday 4th March to opa@oaklandscatholicschool.org. Payment should be made via the Scopay system and collection details will be issued with order confirmations.

Attendance and Uniform

As you are aware, the DfE have said that all students must return to school from Monday 8th March, apart from those young people who have had a letter telling them to remain in shielding.

The expectation is that students will be in full and correct uniform on their return. However, we appreciate that lockdown may have meant some students have outgrown uniform or you have had difficulty obtaining items. If that is the case, please contact your child's Head of Year and we will support with any issues over the coming weeks.

Scopay Accounts

In preparation for students' return to school and the re-opening of our canteen, please ensure you have topped up your child's Scopay account.

Parent Support

There is newly published support for parents to help children safe online [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): support for parents and carers to keep children safe online - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/coronavirus-covid-19-support-for-parents-and-carers-to-keep-children-safe-online) (www.gov.uk)

Thank you for your patience regarding the above information and we are very much looking forward to welcoming your children back to school with us. I hope your children are equally excited!

Can I again urge you to complete and submit the LFT permission form if you have not already done so. The deadline for completion is midday on Monday 1st March. This will be a big step in ensuring we can continue to provide quality education safely and will also play its part in the battle against COVID-19 as we hopefully see light at the end of the tunnel.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Matthew Quinn', written in a cursive style.

Mr M Quinn
Headteacher