

23 February 2021



Dear Parent,

Following the Prime Minister's announcement regarding the roadmap out of lockdown yesterday, we are delighted to confirm that we will be able to welcome all students back into school from Monday 8th March. This is very exciting news, and all of us at Cranbrook are looking forward to the buzz and bustle of having your children back on the site. The return will be phased by year-group, to allow for on-site testing of all students before they begin lessons. I will write again to confirm the details of the schedule once these have been decided upon.

The relevant Government guidance extends to over 60 pages and can be found [here](#). I have summarised the key elements of it below:

1. Our return can be phased from 8th March to allow for on-site Lateral Flow Device (LFD) testing of all students, prioritising key worker and vulnerable children and those in Years 10-13. Once students have received a negative test result, they can start face to face lessons. Please note that testing remains voluntary but is strongly encouraged; those that choose not to be tested must be symptom-free to return to school. The LFD testing will need to be done by year-group. While students are waiting for their first test and the subsequent return to school, they will continue to receive remote education on Teams. This is a major operation, but our core team of testers are now experienced and confident in the process and we will be drawing on a generous team of volunteers to support us. All students will then require a further two LFD tests in school within 3-5 days of each other. This means that each student can expect 3 LFD tests at school in their first fortnight back in lessons.
2. After this initial testing phase at school, all students and staff will be asked to test themselves at home, twice a week (with parental supervision, depending on age) and log the results with the NHS online. We will produce guidance for this. If an LFD test is positive, the individual must isolate in line with the stay-at-home guidance and arrange to take a Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) test at a recognised testing centre to confirm the result. Please note that this LFD testing regime does not replace contact-tracing at school for positive cases.
3. Face coverings are recommended in all areas inside school buildings where social distancing cannot be maintained. This now includes classrooms for a limited time while cases remain high (we hope just this term). We ask that all students have inoffensive, comfortable, washable face coverings rather than the disposable ones that are dropped around the school site and damage the environment. Those individuals who are exempt from wearing face coverings should wear a green school button badge to identify this exemption. [Face coverings: when to wear one, exemptions, and how to make your own - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
4. Overseas boarders can return to Cranbrook early to quarantine and thus enable their face-to-face teaching to start in line with their year-group's phased return. I will write later today to all boarding parents with more detail.
5. Sport and co-curricular activities can take place in bubbles

We are in the process of updating our standard operating procedures and risk assessment, and will send these to you again when they are finished. Our phased-return schedule will incorporate 'training time' for students and staff to re-learn the way that things need to operate at school after they have had their first test, so that they are able to return to everyday life at Cranbrook safely and calmly.

As ever, there is a lot of work to do here to ensure that we start confidently, safely and with a full offering for students. I am proud of everything that our student, staff and parent community has achieved so far under the pressures of Covid-19 and have no doubt that it will rise to the occasion magnificently again. I will write with further details and confirmation of the phased-return schedule by early next week. Please do not hesitate to contact me or Mandy Smart (smartm@cranbrook.kent.sch.uk) if you have any specific queries in the meantime.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'W' followed by a horizontal line.

Will Chuter
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