

3rd March 2021

Dear Families,

Return to School – March 8th 2021

Following the government announcement on Monday 22nd February announcing their “roadmap” out of lockdown, we have been preparing for a full return to school from Monday 8th March. You can read Ambitious about Autism’s full position statement [here](#). There are many reasons to feel hopeful and optimistic at this time including the roll out of the vaccination programme. Nevertheless, we continue to take a cautious approach. We know that there is still the possibility of bubble closures in the next term and that we need to continue to implement all the protective measures.

I have prepared a video which you can watch here: <https://youtu.be/XerImQnAsVo> and please show it to your son/daughter to help them prepare for the return.

Attendance

As communicated previously, and in line with government expectations, attendance from Monday 8th March is mandatory for all pupils except those who themselves are shielding.

Phased Return

A very small number of pupils have been identified as those who would benefit from a phased return and we have worked with those families on their plans.

School Day and Gates

In the week commencing 8th March, we will finish at 2pm on Monday and Thursday to complete staff asymptomatic testing.

From Monday 15th March, the school day returns to normal:

- 8.20-8.50am: Drop Off
- 2.45-3.15pm Pick Up
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As before, please support us by using the yellow feet to social distance at the gates and also spreading out the times. We are much busier (and therefore it takes longer) at 2.45pm.

Pupils will enter via the same Gate (1 at Primary, 2 at Trim Trail and 3 over by Secondary) that they entered before lockdown began.

Testing

I will not repeat the information here as we sent a very detailed letter which can be read on our website [here](#) and I discuss it more in the video – starting at minute [2:48](#).

In week commencing 8th March we'll test all pupils, **who give consent**, twice at school.

In week commencing 15th March, we'll test all pupils once and then they will begin their home-testing regime.

To reassure, participation in asymptomatic testing is entirely voluntary and will only be done with the consent of families in advance and the pupil themselves on the day – if they change their mind, this is okay!

School Day

The video contains more information for pupils but as before:

- Pupils will stay in their form classroom for all lessons during the day whilst the teachers circulate to teach them.
- We will be returning to “normal” lessons rather than using the VLE to deliver the majority of content.
- We will continue with our two separate “sittings” in terms of using the playground and dining hall.

Uniform and PE Kit

As always, we encourage uniform but take a pragmatic approach for our pupils may experience particular sensory issues with clothing.

We would like pupils to wear their school uniform. If they have grown out of it then please use our school colours: plain clothes in white, black, grey and navy are acceptable. Please be mindful about bright colours, inappropriate slogans or large logos. Equally, if you're finding sourcing uniform a struggle, then please contact Diana White.

Laptop and other equipment

Please return the Rise laptop with your son or daughter on Monday alongside the other equipment (mouse, headphones, charger) and other books and materials we have sent for learning at home.

Protective Measures

You can access our updated risk assessments on our coronavirus [page](#).

We ask that families continue to play their very important, first “circle of protection”:

- Please do not send your child to school if they are unwell with any cold/flu like symptom.
- Please do not send your child to school if anyone in the household has coronavirus symptoms, is waiting for a test result or has tested positive.

After that, The Rise will take over and implement the other protective measures such as:

- Encouraging social distancing as far as possible
- Reducing mixing between different groups of pupils
- Encouraging handwashing
- Providing personal protective equipment such as masks, sanitiser and additional cleaning products
- Providing additional cleaning

Welcome back!

To conclude, we are really looking forward to reuniting the school community from Monday and will continue to everything in our power to provide a vibrant learning experience whilst keeping the community safe.

Please do not hesitate to get in touch if you’ve got any questions.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Helen Ralston".

Helen Ralston

Head of The Rise School