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Dear Parents

Wider school reopening from Monday 8th March

We welcome the news announced on Monday that schools will reopen to all students from Monday 8th March and look forward to having our students back on site reconnecting with school life. We have received the first set of guidance from the Department for Education that supports the process of reopening and I would urge you to read the guidance, available [here](#), as all schools must comply with these arrangements. Much of what is included sets out the same procedures we implemented during the Autumn term. However, one key difference is the introduction of on-site Covid-19 testing.

It is clear at this early stage that the reopening of schools, certainly secondary schools, will be phased over a number of days. This will be to meet the government's instruction to offer all students an on-site lateral flow Covid-19 test and for them to receive a negative test result before they return to face-to-face teaching. We will maintain our provision for students that have continued to attend Oathall during this latest lockdown period.

We have well established on-site testing that we have been using with students and staff working in school during lockdown, however scaling this up to administer testing to over 1000 students will be a logistical challenge. The DFE guidance also indicates that year groups 10 and 11 should be prioritised along with vulnerable children and children of key workers.

Our current planning is that year groups will return as follows:

Monday 8 th March	Year 11
Tuesday 9 th March	Year 10
Wednesday 10 th March	Year 7
Thursday 11 th March	Year 8
Friday 12 th March	Year 9

In order to manage the testing, students in each year group will need to have a staggered start on the day of their return to school. Further details will be published next week. Please follow [this link](#) for a further letter about testing from 8th March together with a parental consent form.

We must also factor in that students who have the first test are then expected to have two more tests on-site with each of the three tests being three to five days apart. Clearly, this will involve significant numbers of school staff which may mean our capacity will be reduced elsewhere. Following these three tests the guidance indicates that students will be supplied with self-test kits and test themselves twice a week at home.

One other area of the guidance that is worth noting at this stage is the use of face coverings. You will remember that students were wearing these during transitions between lessons, but not in classrooms, prior to the lockdown. The DFE guidance has been updated and now recommends that face coverings should be worn in classrooms unless social distancing can be maintained. We are currently considering how best to implement this recommendation.

Throughout the lockdown we have been extremely impressed by the commitment that all members of the Oathall community have shown in ensuring that the students continue with their learning. The news this week offers real hope about returning to a more normal school life but as explained, it does not mean that **all** our students will be attending school on Monday 8th March as suggested in the headline announcements. To enable staff to prepare their on-site teaching, Friday 5th March will be a learning consolidation day. This will provide students with time to catch up on any incomplete or missed assignments that have been set on Google Classroom. Please note that staff will be unable to attend to emails during that day.

The first week of wider reopening will be particularly challenging and we will have to suspend live on-line teaching, for those students remaining at home, in order to meet the demands of getting everyone back in school as quickly and safely as possible.

We will provide further details in due course and thank you for your on-going support.

Kind regards

Edward Rodriguez
Headteacher