

The Beacon Folkestone

Park Farm Road | Folkestone | Kent CT19 5DN

Tel: 01303 847555

Fax: 01303 251929

Email: office@thebeacon.kent.sch.uk

www.thebeacon.kent.sch.uk



Thursday 4th March 2021

Dear Parents/Carers,

We are looking forward to welcoming back a large number of the pupils on Monday 8th March. I am aware that a small number of pupils and staff will remain shielding upon the direct advice of their clinician. We all hope that given the rollout of the vaccines and the clarity of the road map set out by the Government, we are truly on the finishing straight and with the final home stretch (June 21st) firmly in our collective sights.

Despite the Government's clear direction that all pupils should return to school on Monday 8th March, we appreciate that a small number of you will be still concerned and anxious about this. We are committed to working with you to support you and your child/young person's return to school this term. Please speak to your child/young person's teacher to discuss your concerns and how we may work with you to facilitate a return in the near future.

You will be pleased to know we have been successfully running a testing system in school for some time now. This is for pupils and staff who are not displaying coronavirus symptoms, using the 'lateral flow tests'. We will continue to offer this service in school for secondary school and college age pupils who want, and are able, to participate in the process. School staff will be moving toward a home testing system.

Can I take this opportunity to remind you of some of the key factors regarding the testing programme for pupils:

- Tests are available to secondary age pupils only - Year 7 and above.
- The test is voluntary. It can be supported by the staff, but we are not allowed to do it for them.
- Those taking the test will be supervised by trained school staff, and wherever possible the class team that know your child will be there to support them.
- Although the tests are quick and easy using a swab of the nose and throat, as the test is self-administered, unfortunately, some of our young people will not be able to access the test. I am afraid there is nothing we as a school can do to change this.
- We cannot do the test on your child/young person.
- By filling in the consent form, you are also indicating that you think your child/young person is capable, with staff supervision and support, to self-administer the test.
- Results (which take around half an hour from testing) will be shared directly with staff and pupils participating. Where participants are under 16, parents or legal guardians will also be informed.
- Testing will, of course, be offered free of charge.
- In the coming weeks we are due to receive home testing kits which we will then be able to allocate to those pupils/parents who wish to test at home rather than in school. We will still be running a small testing site for those pupils/parents who would rather the testing is conducted in school.

If you are happy that your child can do the test and you wish for them to be tested, please complete the enclosed consent statement (one per pupil) and return it to the school office via covid-19@thebeacon.kent.sch.uk. If you have any other queries regarding testing, please feel free to contact this email address or the school office asking for Loren Freeland.

You do not need to let us know if you are not giving consent as we will only carry out the test for those for whom we receive a form.

Can we kindly ask you to keep to the staggered start times of 8.55am for taxi and organised transport drop-offs and 9.15am for parental/carer drop off and independent travellers (pupils walking or cycling to school). We will also maintain the staggered finishing times, 3.00pm for taxi and organised transport pick-ups and 3.15pm for parental/carer pick-ups. Please keep to the social distancing guidance of two metres away from anyone not in your direct household or support bubble during these times. As numbers increase from Monday, it will become more important to keep to the timings as set out above so we can keep our pupils, families and staff as safely distanced as possible.

Lunches will all be served and taken in classrooms/bubbles so we can keep pupils and staff as safe as possible. This will be in place for the rest of this term. We will review this and other arrangements toward the end of term, with the hope that we can start to relax some of our measures as we take a step toward normality.

Many thanks for your ongoing support. As I have said before, we couldn't maintain our positivity and momentum without you.

Yours sincerely



Ady Young
Headteacher