

23rd February 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

You will have seen the Prime Minister's announcement yesterday afternoon that students will return to schools from 8th March. Both professionally and personally, I am delighted by this news. Professionally, I have always been of the view that the best place for our students is in school; personally, I am delighted to have avoided the prospect of walking away from an empty building at the end of term. Much better to bring 40 years of teaching to a close with some real students to say goodbye to!

However, and not for the first time, the devil is in the detail. Yesterday the DfE also issued a 67 page guidance document on the reopening. This can be found at: [Schools coronavirus \(COVID-19\) operational guidance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/91111/schools-coronavirus-covid-19-operational-guidance) I shall be reviewing this in detail over the next few days. Immediately, however, it is clear that the process is not quite as straightforward as it might have appeared yesterday. In particular there is provision within the guidance to stagger the return of students to secondary schools to ensure that all students have had one negative test result test before they resume face to face education. We will need to work out a plan for the return of students over the start of the week beginning 8th March. For some students, this may mean that they do not return until 9th or 10th March.

I will write again in the next few days with detailed plans for our re-opening. In the meantime, please ensure that students are continuing to follow the lockdown regulations. The biggest threat to a successful reopening of schools (and, for that matter, the promised future relaxations of the social distancing rules that were announced yesterday) is a resurgence of the virus in the community. I know that, as the weather improves, it will be tempting for children to meet up out of doors. Please continue to do everything you can to keep your children safe and to prevent them from being infected with the coronavirus or transmitting it to others. Thank you for everything you have already done over the last year to support the Academy and our students. It really does start to feel like there is a road back to some sort of normality over the next few months.

With every best wish

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard Hedge', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

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