

PENAIR SCHOOL

www.penair.cornwall.sch.uk | 01872 274737 | enquiries@penair.cornwall.sch.uk

Registered Office Address:

Penair School
St Clement
Truro
Cornwall
TR1 1TN

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Dear Parents & Carers,

Firstly, I wanted to say how much we are looking forward to all of the children returning to school for face-to-face education and doing our very best to support their learning and development over both the remainder of the academic year and indeed throughout their time with us at Penair.

We realise that some children and staff are anxious about the return to school. Please be assured we will do all that we can to support both children and staff on their return and continue to focus on positive relationships. Our systems of infection control will remain largely unchanged so students will experience the same routines as they did in September. I have summarised our procedures and would urge parents to take time to read the information with their child which also reflects the updated government guidance for schools which we will implement fully at Penair, including testing arrangements for Covid-19 using the lateral flow testing kits which are being provided to all secondary schools.

Consent forms

The government has advised schools to test students for Covid-19 upon starting the school term. Testing of students can only be done if parents have completed a consent form. I would strongly encourage all parents who have yet to do so to consent to their child being tested and to complete the consent form by **Tuesday 2nd March** at the latest. This is a key area of our systems of control and will help us keep all in our school community safe and reduce the disruption to students and staff regarding the spread of coronavirus and challenges of self-isolation.

Over 600 Parents have already completed the consent form and for these parents there is no need to resubmit the form. We will be phoning parents who have not completed the form prior to their children returning. Clearly, the fewer parents we have to re-send the form to or make phone contact with, the more efficiently we can complete this work. Please complete the consent form at your earliest convenience using the link below:

https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=b2I7yOXzNkeaA4AbL6uiYIM07TPtdgFMtyT_q9wPXfFUM0g1REpQWDE5OFIDWFJQM1FOWIVKMIrcNi4u



Testing procedures

Our test team has been in place at Penair since January. We are very fortunate that our team is being led by military personnel who have had previous experience of running mobile test centres across the country. Our highly efficient team have been testing both staff and students on a weekly basis in school since January.

The government has advised that to produce the most accurate test outcomes, students should be tested twice within a period of 3-5 days. Therefore, we have planned a staggered return by year group over the first week.

Each year group which attends school during the opening phase will need to go directly to their first period of the day instead of tutor group registration. Students will then continue to stay in this teaching group until they have undertaken their test and their results have been processed. We will try and match student timetables as closely as we can to their normal day, but this may not be possible. The reason for this approach is to minimise the number of contacts that students have and reduce the number of students having to self-isolate if one of their peer group returns a positive test.

Students who return a positive test result will be isolated within school until arrangements can be made for them to be collected by their parents from the school. They will then be required to stay at home for a period of 10 days (7 school days) and will need to be supervised by parents, accessing schoolwork online from Thursday 11th this will be available as independent work via their MS team tile.

In addition, any student who has been in close contact with a student that returns a positive test will also be required to self-isolate for a period of 10 days. We are aware that the lateral flow tests will uncover more asymptomatic cases within our school community in the first instance, but we must all play our part in reducing the spread of Covid-19 and keeping everyone safe.

The lateral flow test involves students self-administering a swab to their back of their throat and their nose. The swab will then be handled by staff who will undertake the necessary processing. Tests will take in the region of 30 to 60 minutes to provide a positive or negative result. Please visit our social media links where we have shared a video clip which shows our test centre in action along with the testing process. We hope that parents and students will watch this clip and again feel reassured by the process.

The very few students who are unable to administer their own swab (for example some students with physical disabilities or some who have an Educational Health Care Plan) may have their tests administered by a member of the staff team. If this is the case for your child, please email Mrs Kate Finlay, Assistant Headteacher (Director of Inclusion) who will co-ordinate this.

Mrs Finlay's email contact is: kfinlay@penair.cornwall.sch.uk

REMINDER, tests cannot be administered without parent/carer consent.

The school will only inform parents if the result of their child's lateral flow test is positive. The school will not contact parents regarding negative results. However, once the test is registered with NHS England it is expected that you will receive a text/email confirming the result

Home Testing for Students

The Government have also stated that home testing is being introduced for secondary age pupils (11+). It is important that students are initially supervised whilst testing to make sure they are doing it correctly. This is why testing will initially take place on-site. Testing on-site initially is a condition of being able to transition students to be issued with kits that will enable them to be tested at home. After the 3 initial tests at school, students will be offered coronavirus tests that they should take twice a week at home. If your child is not participating in testing, they should attend school as usual. We will write to parents with further details of how and when the home test kits will be distributed to students.

Timetable for return to the school

Students should attend school in non-uniform as per our current practice dressing both sensibly for the weather conditions and suitably for a day in school (PE kit if they have PE).

As parents will appreciate, the start to term arrangements are complex. The school needs to test each year group of around 200-240 students three times within the space of 3-5 days and the process of administering the tests and waiting for the results for each child will be in the region of 90 minutes. Therefore, we cannot have all year groups in school from the start of term. Students should also be aware there may be some restrictions on students' social times on their first day back in school, this is to reduce the possibility of further close contacts having too self-isolate.

We will endeavour to follow as closely as possible the school timetable for all year groups, however, to accommodate the requirement to keep students in discrete bubbles we have had to make some changes. Students in **years 11 and 8** groups should attend their first day of school in their PE kit as all students will have PE even if this is not on their timetable for that day.

Please find below a timetable for the staggered return of each year group to the school until we welcome the full school cohort back to school on Thursday 11 March 2021.

Timetable of student year groups returning to school:

Date	Year group(s) being tested.	Notes
Mon 8 March	11 + 7	Year 11 and 7 in school only. All year 11 students will have PE on this day and should come in PE kit
Tue 9 March	10 + 8	Year 10 and 8 in school only All year 8 students will have PE on this day and should come in PE kit
Wed 10 March	9	Year 9 in school only
Thurs 11 March	Testing cycle continues	All years return to school

Each year group will be required to stay at home beyond the testing day, until all students are scheduled to return to school as per the timetable above.

Vulnerable and key worker children:

The school will be closed to all students including vulnerable and key worker children on Friday 5th March. This will allow for department teams to meet to confirm plans for school reopening and to complete any necessary training ahead of the lateral testing programme which lies ahead, which will involve over 30 members of staff. If this causes parents a specific difficulty, please make contact with us by email enquiries@penair.cornwall.sch.uk

Remote Learning

There will be no live lessons taught on Friday 5 March. Work will still be set for students to complete via Microsoft Teams. These will be pre-set independent tasks linked to our curriculum.

For those year groups not in school from Monday 8 to Wednesday 10 March staff will continue to teach all lessons remotely. Children will be able to continue to access their lessons through Microsoft Teams.

Maintaining wider social distancing and PPE practices

Rest assured that we are doing everything we can to make sure our children can return to school safely. Throughout the course of the academic year, the school has put in place measures to limit mixing of year groups at the start and end of the day, on the school buses, during lesson changeovers and during break and lunch times. These arrangements will continue through the spring term. We will also continue to allow students to wear their own clothes, it is very important that everyone continues to be vigilant and maintains their social distance both inside and outside of school. This will be particularly important in light of the testing where students could feel a false sense of security from returning a negative test result.

Face Coverings

Parents should be aware that the government has updated its advice on face coverings and is shared below.

“Where pupils in year 7 (which would be children who were aged 11 on 31 August 2020) and above are educated, we recommend that face coverings should be worn by adults and pupils when moving around the premises, outside of classrooms, such as in corridors and communal areas where social distancing cannot easily be maintained. Face coverings do not need to be worn by pupils when outdoors on the premises. In addition, we now also recommend in those schools, that face coverings should be worn in classrooms or during activities unless social distancing can be maintained.”

This is a practice that we have had in place for our key worker children since January and has worked very well. Please ensure that your child has a face covering which they can bring to school every day. We would recommend that children have a spare face covering both in case they lose one or in the event that they wish to change it during the day. Should your child forget or lose their face covering, they may get a disposable face mask from the Student Enquiries office upon arrival at school. Some individuals are exempt from wearing face coverings.

This applies to those who:

- cannot put on, wear or remove a face covering because of a physical impairment or disability, illness or mental health difficulties.

If this applies to your child, we would ask you to notify us in writing to confirm that they are not able to wear a face covering stating the reason. The government have stated that this guidance will be reviewed at the end of this term for Easter.

Students will continue to sanitise their hands upon arrival to and exit from classes. During the autumn term, we were very pleased with the way students sanitised their desks at the start of each lesson, ready for the next class to enter. These arrangements will continue in the spring term.

Please remind your child that they also need to practice social distancing and good hygiene habits on school buses. They should sit in their designated year group positions on the school bus service and wear a face covering at all times on either Local Authority organised, school or public transport.

As per the above timetable, Monday 8 and Tuesday 9 March, there will be two-year groups attending school on each day. If your child uses a bus service, please advise him/her that the older year group are to sit at the front of the bus and the younger year groups are to sit at the rear of the bus in line with our current practice. Children should also try to socially distance on the bus as there will be more space than normal and once again this could reduce the amount of close contacts in the event that a child returns a positive test.

Break and lunch arrangements

Our canteen will be closed for the first two weeks of the half term as it will be the base for our test centre without disrupting the learning in other subjects. The canteen will re-open from Monday 22 March.

If your child is in receipt of free school meals in years 7 – 11, you will receive a voucher to cover the first two weeks of the term, allowing you to provide lunch for them daily whilst they are not in school and prepare a packed lunch for them on the days when they are in school.

General Statement

Given that about a third of all Covid cases are asymptomatic and go unnoticed, it is likely that the lateral flow testing programme will identify more cases of Covid-19 than we have seen in school over the past term. However, we hope that the in-school daily testing of close contacts will mean there is less educational disruption as we will not be sending so many students home to self-isolate as a result.

The staffing demands, both senior staff and support staff, to manage this programme will be significant, taking staff off their regular duties for up to 6 hours daily. We ask parents to be mindful of this in their general communications with the school. We are fortunate to have such a positive parent body who work collaboratively with the school and recognise the demands placed on the school staff team. We ask parents to continue to be mindful of this in the months ahead while working with us.

Government information for parents

Please find three government linked documents below which provide useful information for parents:

Schools coronavirus (COVID-19) operational guidance

[Schools coronavirus \(COVID-19\) operational guidance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/84421/schools-coronavirus-operational-guidance)

Q&A on Mass testing in schools:

<https://dfemedia.blog.gov.uk/2020/12/15/mass-testing-in-schools-your-questions-answered/>

'How to do your Covid Test'

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/946612/How_to_do_your_test_COVID_19_instruction_leaflet_for_schools.pdf

And finally

Once again, a reminder to parents to return the online consent form at your earliest convenience. This will be so helpful in assisting the school through two rounds of testing for each student at the start of term.

Ideally, parents should return this consent form immediately, but no later than by Tuesday 2nd March.

Lockdown has been a challenging period for all of us, and we'd like to thank you for your continuing support during this difficult and uncertain time. We would also like to thank you for all your support in helping your child learn from home. We will continue to keep in touch if we update our plans or if we need to make changes due to new government guidance.

We look forward to welcoming your child back to school at the start of term as per the above schedule.

Yours sincerely



James Davidson
Headteacher