

26th February 2021

Dear parents/carers,

Re: Reopening of John O'Gaunt from 8th March 2021

I hope this letter finds you well and the recent brighter days and announcements are providing you and your family with some extra cheer.

Following the news that schools in England are to reopen to all students from Monday 8th March 2021, I am writing with the first of two communications about the arrangements at John O'Gaunt. This letter is to provide you with the key information about arrangements for the first day back and the requirements for testing. A further letter will follow with wider information, reminders and guidance about school operations. As I am sure you will appreciate, there is much to plan in a short space of time and a lot of information we will need to convey to you. It is for this reason we are splitting communication across two letters.

Monday 8th March 2021

We have taken the decision that all students are to return to school on Monday 8th March. On this day, students will spend most of their time in their tutor group and, those students for whom we have been given consent, will complete the first of 3 lateral flow tests that DfE guidance has instructed schools to complete.

Whilst the formal timetable will be suspended, students will be undertaking a range of educational activities. They will also attend an assembly to brief them on the revised daily routines, receive reminders about behaviour expectations and celebrate the many success stories from remote learning.

We feel that opening the school in this way will cause the least amount of disruption overall and enable the school to comply with guidance around testing and public health, whilst enabling us to return to normal provision as soon as possible. Depending on how well the testing goes (please do keep an eye out for further communications from JOG that day) students will resume their usual timetable from Tuesday 9th March. The school day on Monday 8th will follow the same timings as usual, including breaks. The canteen will be open for a full service and transport arrangements will be available to those who use them as normal.

Friday 5th March 2021

As part of our preparations for reopening, we are going to suspend live lessons next Friday. This enables us time to work with staff on site and prepare the school for the return of students as safely and smoothly as we can. It will also provide an opportunity for students to have some time to reflect and look forward to a return to full time face-to-face education. Students will be asked to undertake a 'learning reflection' task during Period 1, with the rest of the day dedicated to catch-up work, completing any outstanding assessments that have been set or complete tasks that can be done offline. Friday 5th is also a national 'screen free' day (sometimes known as 'Day of unplugging') and we are encouraging staff to set work that enables students to minimise their screen time that day. As with 'JOG Wellbeing Day', this is not a day off but it is a day where there is

more flexibility for students to structure their day in a way to suit their needs best, before their return the following Monday.

Testing

As mentioned above, we are aiming to complete the first lateral flow test for all students on Monday 8th March. The testing programme is a highly logistical operation for the school and is being run by school staff as well as trained volunteers from our community. Students will be asked to attend the testing bays at certain times during the day in tutor groups, before returning to their tutor base to await their result and continue with the range of activities planned for the day. Each test takes a few minutes and is relatively simple, if a little uncomfortable for some. Trained assistants will be on hand to guide and reassure students throughout the process. The tests are conducted under supervision and administered by the child taking the test. Results are known within 30 minutes and any positive results will be handled sensitively, but in line with the usual public health guidance around isolation and track and trace. The DfE guidance issued this week makes it clear that students can return to face-to-face education following their first negative test result. If you have not already given consent for your child/ren to take the test but are happy to do so, then please navigate to the 'forms' section on Weduc.

Notification of confirmed or suspected COVID-19 cases

As we prepare to welcome all our students back, communication between home and school remains as important as ever. It is vital that you let the school know if your child has to take a test or has COVID symptoms through the office email: jogoffice@excalibur.org.uk.

If you have any other pandemic related concerns that you would like us to be aware of please use this email address to contact us too. We also continue to keep up to date our dedicated area on the school website which can be found at: <http://www.johnogauntschool.co.uk/219/covid-19>.

Further information and guidance

We have been working tirelessly to prepare for reopening, but there are many logistical and operational elements we need to consider carefully. Therefore, I ask for a little more patience from you whilst we finalise the details and will include these in the letter that I send out next week.

In the meantime, I hope you keep safe and we look forward to welcoming all students back to school.

Yours sincerely,



Richard Hawthorne
Head of School