



## THE HELENA ROMANES SCHOOL & SIXTH FORM CENTRE

1<sup>st</sup> March 2021

Dear Parent/Carer,

Further to my letter last week, we are now in a position to communicate our plans for the phased reopening of HRS. The Department for Education guidance makes it clear that we should stagger the return of students to allow for COVID testing to take place during the week commencing 8<sup>th</sup> March 2021. We have now received the parental COVID testing consent forms from those families enrolling on the scheme. Essex County Council have also finalised their plans for the implementation of its community testing programme.

As a consequence, this letter sets out the timetable for the return of students to HRS and also provides some additional key safety information. Please read it carefully and discuss it with your child.

### Testing prior to returning to school

- All students are strongly encouraged to take part in the testing programme. Lateral flow tests will help us to identify asymptomatic cases and ensure that those infected self-isolate. This will help to keep the school and wider community safer and reduce the risk of disruption to onsite education.
- Students will take three supervised tests, before then moving to a system of self-testing at home, supervised by parents.
- Students on the testing programme need to undertake their first test (and for it to be negative) before they are able to return to the classroom.
- Essex County Council has organised for the first of the three tests to be carried out in the community. This is crucial, as students should not be socialising with each other (for example, walking to school together) in advance of their first test. It also allows parents/carers to attend the initial test with their children.
- In addition, Essex County Council has arranged for our students who have enrolled on the programme to be given enhanced guidance during their first test that will support them to successfully carry out their home tests.
- The second and third tests will be carried out at 3-5 day intervals as part of a 'normal' school day.
- We will share details from Essex County Council about booking tests tomorrow.

### Dates and timings of first tests and return to school

Year groups	Date of initial community test	Return to school
10, 11, 12, 13	Thursday 4 <sup>th</sup> to Sunday 7 <sup>th</sup> March	Monday 8 <sup>th</sup> March
7, 8, 9	Thursday 11 <sup>th</sup> to Sunday 14 <sup>th</sup> March	Monday 15 <sup>th</sup> March

- Students who have not enrolled on the programme must also return to school on the 'return to school' dates outlined above.

Parsonage Downs, Great Dunmow, Essex CM6 2AU

T 01371 872560 F 01371 874632 E enquiries@hrs.education [www.helena-roman.essex.sch.uk](http://www.helena-roman.essex.sch.uk)

Headteacher: Daniel Gee BA(Hons), MA, NPGH

## **Remote Education in the weeks beginning 1<sup>st</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> March 2021**

- Prior to the return date for your child, remote education will continue in its current format.
- Students will not be expected to complete work when they are attending their COVID test.
- After the return date for their year group, it is expected that students attend school in the usual way, with attendance being mandatory. Remote education will cease, except for those needing to self-isolate following a positive COVID-19 test, or where a student has been identified as a close contact and is asked to self-isolate.

## **Students currently accessing our onsite provision**

- If your child had been attending school this term (either because you are a key worker or because they have been identified as vulnerable) they should continue to do so during the week commencing 8<sup>th</sup> March 2021.
- Any of these students who are in Years 7, 8 and 9 should attend their normal 'pre-lockdown' morning registration session, as published on their school timetable, at the start of the day on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> March.

## **Safety in School**

The safety measures that were in place last term will remain. These include:

- Ensuring that those with symptoms are not in school and that they seek a PCR test
- Staggering of breaks, lunchtimes and the end of the school day
- The zoning of the school and our eating outlets at break and lunchtimes
- Additional cleaning, especially of high frequency touch points and toilets
- The regular use of hand sanitiser or handwashing including at the start of each lesson, and the promotion of "catch it, bin it, kill it" approaches
- Ventilation of all spaces, in line with guidance
- A one-way system of movement around the school
- Adaptations to some lesson activities, in line with guidance

## **New, additional safety measures**

In addition to the control measures outlined above, we will also be bringing in two additional safety measures as set out by the Department for Education:

1. Providing support and encouragement for students to be involved in the regular testing programme.
2. Requiring the wearing of face masks whilst inside the school building (this now includes in lessons). Please, therefore, make sure that your child has two masks with them each day so that they can follow the guidance and replace any damp masks promptly.

## **How can parents help?**

- As well as discussing the contents of this letter with your child and reminding them of the importance of following these rules and guidelines for the good of themselves, the school and wider community, it would help us if students have their own bottle of hand sanitiser, where appropriate.
- Could we also ask you to check that your child knows how to put on and remove a facemask safely, and also that they have a plastic bag to put their facemask in when they remove it for PE lessons, eating, and at the end of the day. Further details can be found [here](#).

## **Supporting our students**

- We hope that the spring weather and the news that they will soon be back to a more normal school experience will help our students to feel both calm and positive.
- However, we are aware that the last 12 months have been difficult for many of our students. There has been considerable uncertainty and also worry about loved ones. If your child is feeling particularly vulnerable and might need some additional support and care on their return to school, please do let their Head of Year know.

- We would also like to emphasise how well students have done keeping on top of their work whilst working from home. They have developed skills of independence and resilience which will help them in the future. They should feel proud of their achievements so far.

As always, thank you for your continuing support.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Daniel Gee". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'D'.

Daniel Gee  
Headteacher