

**23<sup>rd</sup> February 2021**

**Return to school update – 8<sup>th</sup> March Reset**

Dear Parents and Carers,

Following the Government's announcement last night, I would like to give you some initial information regarding the return to school of our students in our 'March Reset'. I will update you further, with more information, later in the week. There will also be a brief survey I would like you to complete which will help us in our planning.

Firstly, all the staff at the school are looking forward to the return of the students and the resumption of a more normal teaching environment. As you can imagine, we do have concerns about returning to an environment where there are up to thirty people in one classroom. We have a number of staff who fall into the more vulnerable categories but will not be vaccinated until May. And I am sure there are many families out there who share our concerns and also have vulnerable people living in the household. There will be extra control measures in place when the students return, and it is vital that all our students support the college and our ethos by following these control measures willingly.

Information will be posted on the website by clicking the banner on the home page called 'March Reset'. I have already uploaded the document the Government released yesterday called 'Schools Operational Guidance March 21'.

We will be phasing the return of students throughout the first few days of the week beginning the 8<sup>th</sup> March. We have the responsibility of asking all parents to consent to three lateral flow tests with the first test taking place before the students return to 'face-to-face' teaching. This will mean we will have to adopt a very staggered approach to students returning to school. I appreciate that many of you have concerns over lateral flow testing. I presume this is why the Government is asking us to carry out the test three times over the first two weeks. Unfortunately we have not received a start date for the University of Southampton's saliva testing programme.

Following Government guidelines, we will continue to set remote learning activities whilst students work from home. However, from Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> March, we will stop Teams lessons although work will continue to be set on the planner. This will allow us the opportunity to greet and support the students as they return to us. Furthermore, to support the mental health and wellbeing needs of all our students, we intend setting aside two days next week (Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> and Friday 5<sup>th</sup> March) for individual student-tutor meetings via Teams. This will allow us the opportunity to speak to our students about their experiences and any issues they have faced before they return to us the week after.



**Headteacher: Mr A Chipping**

Applemore College, Roman Road, Dibden Purlieu, Southampton SO45 4RQ  
023 8084 8804 [www.applemore.hants.sch.uk](http://www.applemore.hants.sch.uk)

The final point I would like to raise at this time is that of facemasks. We have been informed that facemasks are now required at all times indoors; not only in the corridors but also in the classrooms. Staff will also comply with this, except when they want to speak to the whole class and remove their mask so the students can hear them clearly. This can only happen when the teacher is at least 2 metres from the students (this is part of the Government guidelines). I appreciate that wearing a facemask for an extended period of time will be uncomfortable, however I do expect every student to follow this rule. A small number of students are exempt from wearing facemasks as the guidance states. I will be asking Progress Leaders to confirm the circumstances with parents.

Once again, thank you for your support at this rather challenging time. We will continue to update you over the next week about how we intend re-opening. We will also be providing various videos on the website related to aspects of school life.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alan Chipping', with a horizontal line underneath.

**Mr Alan Chipping**  
Headteacher