

**1<sup>st</sup> March 2021**

## **March Reset Update**

Dear Parents and Carers,

First of all, thank you to those parents who have returned the March Reset survey so promptly. The information has been very helpful. If you have raised any concerns around your child, these have been discussed by the Student Support Team, and we have allocated a member of staff to support them. This could be their tutor or another member of the pastoral care team. If you have requested a phone call, then we will be in touch this week. Please bear in mind that your child also has a chance to discuss any issues with their tutor on Thursday or Friday during the Teams tutor meeting.

I do appreciate the concerns expressed by many parents over various aspects of our March Reset. Please bear with us whilst we implement Government guidance which can quite often change very suddenly (face coverings being an example).

Further to my recent letter concerning our March Reset, I would like to draw your attention to some key information published in 'Schools Coronavirus (COVID-19) Operational Guidance', February 2021 (for the full document please see the March Reset page on our website).

### **Covid-19 Symptoms and Guidance – A Reminder**

As you will be aware, the guidance concerning a positive test in school remains the same as in the autumn term. The guidance states:

*Pupils, staff and other adults must not come into the school if:*

- They have one or more coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms
- A member of their household (including someone in their support bubble or childcare bubble if they have one) has coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms
- They are required to quarantine having recently visited countries outside the Common Travel Area
- They have had a positive test

*They must immediately cease to attend and not attend for at least 10 days from the day after:*

- The start of their symptoms
- The test date if they did not have any symptoms but have had a positive test (whether this was a Lateral Flow Device (LFD) or Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) test)

*If anyone in school develops a new and continuous cough or a high temperature, or has a loss of, or change in, their normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia), they:*

- must be sent home to begin isolation - the isolation period includes the day the symptoms started and the next 10 full days



**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)

- are advised to follow the guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection
- are advised to arrange to have a test as soon as possible to see if they have coronavirus (COVID-19)

Other members of their household (including any siblings and members of their support or childcare bubble if they have one) should self-isolate. Their isolation period includes the day symptoms started for the first person in their household, or the day their test was taken if they did not have symptoms, whether this was a Lateral Flow Device (LFD) or Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) test), and the next 10 full days. If a member of the household starts to display symptoms while self-isolating they will need to restart the 10 day isolation period and book a test. If anyone tests positive whilst not experiencing symptoms but develop symptoms during the isolation period, they must restart the 10 day isolation period from the day they developed symptoms.

If a pupil displays coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, or has a positive test, while at school they should avoid using public transport and, wherever possible, be collected by a member of their family or household. In exceptional circumstances, if parents or carers cannot arrange to have their child collected, if age-appropriate and safe to do so the child should walk or cycle home following a positive test result.

These guidelines remain the same as when they were introduced in the autumn term. Please note that the Government has withdrawn 7 consecutive LFDs as a way to keep students in school if someone they are close to tests positive. This means, as previously, in this circumstance, students will be asked to self-isolate for ten days even if they have had COVID-19 or one of the vaccines.

I really do not want to close any bubble or send any students home again. The best way to avoid this is for individual students to remember to maintain social distancing especially when they are with their friends.

### **March Reset at Applemore**

On returning to school, there are a few key points of which students need to be aware. All students will be offered a one-to-one meeting with their tutor during the week beginning the 1<sup>st</sup> March. This will give students the chance to chat about any concerns they have on returning to school.

### **Staggered start due to Lateral Flow Testing**

Following government guidance, students will need to take a lateral flow test and wait for the test to show as negative **before they enter the classroom** and so for this reason we will need to stagger the return. We have looked at various different models to accomplish this but I am afraid with a catchment that requires transport to get to school, it is going to be tricky.

We have set up two testing streams to process two year bubbles safely and as quickly as possible through the lateral flow tests but the main hold-up is the waiting area for the students before the test and the 30 minute wait after the test.

Throughout the first three days of next week, we need students to arrive at the times listed in the programme below to avoid them having long periods of waiting. If you have any transport difficulties with this schedule then please contact Mrs Wallace-Dutton at [wallaj@applemore.hants.sch.uk](mailto:wallaj@applemore.hants.sch.uk) and she will be able to provide a more suitable time slot for you. The benefit of this system is we can process the whole school in three days and by Thursday morning all students will be in normal lessons. If you haven't yet completed the survey, please do so in order for the final preparations to be made. We will send out a separate letter and electronic form in the next couple of days for you to give permission for testing to take place. Again, please return this form as soon as possible. I am afraid the form is not very user friendly and requires some information we already hold, but it is the form the Government have insisted we use and collect.

Please can I remind you that the lateral flow tests are not compulsory however are most beneficial to the whole school community if as many students as possible take part in them. The survey results show that, at present, over 97% of the students will take part in the tests. I hope that provides some reassurance to parents.

### **Monday Years 7 & 11**

8.30 7CAE 11BWE  
9.30 7CWT 11JKP  
10.30 7MWY 11JWK  
11.30 7TLM 11KDR  
12.30 7TWS 11PSS

### **Tuesday Years 8 & 10**

8.30 8DML 10ADY (formerly 10SHY)  
9.30 8JWR 10AWG  
10.30 8KCY 10CHL  
11.30 8LSM 10JHS  
12.30 8PTS 8VTI

### **Wednesday Year 9**

8.30 9AWS 9LGY  
9.30 9HKS 9EPU  
10.30 9SME 9MSR

Once the negative result has been confirmed, students can then go to their classroom and from then on will attend lessons as normal. The second and third lateral flow tests will take place within the first two weeks but students will be taken from classes. Once students have had all three tests at school then, following Government guidance, they will be asked to take two tests per week at home. There will be a video explaining the lateral flow testing process as well as the March Reset on the website by the end of the week so please can I ask you to ensure that your child has watched them.

### **Uniform**

Again, following Government guidance, all students are expected to attend in uniform. The only exception to this is on the days when they have PE and then they can attend in their PE kit (this applies to all years and is in place to avoid using the changing rooms). We are very sympathetic to the fact families may be struggling financially. We do not expect you to buy new uniform if it is not possible. I would ask that you contact the school as we may be able to help.

### **One-Way System to help Social Distancing**

We can't stress enough the importance of staying social distant as much as possible, particularly on buses, queues, tutor bases and at break/lunchtimes. This is also the case in corridors. In order to ensure that we are limiting the risk of transmission as much as we can, we are creating a one-way system around the school. We are in the process of creating a video to help students to visualise this. The map of the one-way system is already on our website on the March Reset page.

### **Hand Sanitisers and Cleanliness**

In addition to other safety measures, we now ask all students sanitise their hands on entering every classroom. Sanitisers have been installed in all rooms for this purpose. At the start of each lesson we also ask that students help the teacher to wipe down the desk and back of the chair that they will be using for that lesson. It will not be possible to maintain a distance of 2 metres within the classrooms however the seating is side by side and facing forward and we expect students to remain in their seats. They need to have their own equipment (pens, pencils, ruler, rubber, water bottle and calculator as a minimum) and not borrow or share. We have employed extra staff to clean all banisters and door handles in the school throughout the day.

## **Bubbles**

On the first day, students need to go straight through reception to the hall to undergo their first lateral flow test. After the first day, when students arrive in the mornings, they will go to the same tutor rooms using the separate entrances as they did before Christmas. They will remain in the bubble areas; Year 11 in the Art and English block, Year 10 in IT and Graphics, Year 9 in Science and MFL, Year 8 in Maths and Year 7 along the humanities corridor for tutor time. They will need to use the hand sanitiser on the way into school in the morning and make sure they remain in their tutor room waiting for tutor time to begin. Break-times and lunchtimes remain separate ensuring that our year groups are in bubbles at these times. The staggered finish times of the day also remain in place. After-school clubs will be allowed however they will also be in bubbles to ensure that there will be no mixing of year groups at all.

You will also be aware that teachers are returning to their own rooms with students moving more around the college, hence the reason for the extra safety measures. As you know, this was our intention for our return after Christmas. I appreciate a number of parents are concerned about this, however we felt, as have many other local schools, that the pressure the previous system was placing on teaching staff would lead to staff burn out and increasing high levels of staff absence if we continued much longer. The Health and Safety Executive agreed during their autumn visit that the measures we were implementing were appropriate to the situation.

## **Visitors**

We have also received guidance from Hampshire concerning visiting the site. From Monday 8<sup>th</sup> March, any visitor who needs to access the site **beyond** reception, will need to take a lateral flow test and wait 30 minutes for a negative result before proceeding with their visit. This applies to any visitor; parents, contractors, and even Governors. There for we suggest most visits are brief and take place in the reception area.

## **Face coverings**

It seems our parental body is split over the use of face coverings in class. Our initial plan was to insist on face coverings however since last week, the Government have unfortunately changed their guidance. I quote from the TES:

*Education Minister Nick Gibb said on Thursday that the wearing of face coverings in secondary schools was not compulsory but instead was being 'highly recommended'. He told BBC Breakfast: 'We are saying it is not mandatory for schools to have masks in classrooms but it is highly recommended because we want to do everything we can to reduce the risk of transmission in the school'.*

I am sure some parents will be relieved by this change in guidance and some less happy, however we have no choice but to follow it. Therefore, we would highly recommend that all students wear face coverings in all classrooms. Please remember that we are still insisting on face coverings in open, indoor, communal areas.

## **Year 11 Assessment**

And finally, we have now received the Government guidance on what will happen in the summer concerning Year 11 assessments. I will send a separate letter to Year 11 parents later in the week with further information. However, I have placed the full guidance on the website on the March Reset page for your information. There are two important dates to note: 18<sup>th</sup> June is the last date for the submission of grades to the exam boards by the school, and 12<sup>th</sup> August is exam results day (please note this is much earlier than normal). They have not informed us of the last school day for Year 11.

I apologise that this has been such a long letter. Hopefully it has been useful. And once again, thank you for your incredible support. We very much appreciate it.

Yours sincerely

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

**Mr Alan Chipping**  
Headteacher