



24th February 2021

Return to school for all students

I am sure that you share our relief that SMSJ can finally begin welcoming all of our primary and secondary children back from Monday 8th March. Whilst we have all learnt a great deal from remote learning, I believe there is a consensus that having children back in front of professionals is preferable for all.

As you can imagine, a full return is a complex logistical challenge and I will write again in the next few days once we have fully digested the guidance and updated our risk assessment. The safety of our community is always the priority and there are four key messages which I need to share with you.

Firstly, we expect that our primary students will arrive and depart according to the previous timetable which facilitates social distancing. Details of timings will be shared through our bulletins.

Secondly, the current guidance ([click here](#)) directs us to ensure that all secondary students are tested for COVID-19 before returning fully. Therefore, it is likely that there will be a phased return with Key Stage 3, 4 and 5 students returning following receipt of a negative test result. Students in Year 7 and above will be tested three times at school following their return. Thereafter, the government has outlined that secondary students will be supplied with tests to use at home. If you have not yet given your consent for your child to receive a lateral flow device test, please complete [this form](#). The government has no plans to test primary students at this time.

Thirdly, the government is recommending that the use of face coverings in secondary schools be extended to all indoor environments for the remainder of this term. We will outline how this will be implemented at SMSJ in our forthcoming bulletins.

Finally, information is due from the Department for Education during the course of the week, including guidance regarding students who were due to sit external exams this summer. We will update you once this has been received.

We are mindful that our return will need to be managed carefully but we do not see our children as a 'lost generation'. I want to reassure you that wellbeing will be our first concern and I am confident that when our children are happy and feel safe, learning will continue with renewed enthusiasm and hope.

Once again, I would like to thank you all for your heartfelt messages of understanding, support and gratitude throughout this unprecedented year.

Yours faithfully,

Mr M Serrão
Principal