

# St Matthew Academy

St Joseph's Vale, Blackheath, London SE3 0XX

Headteacher: Ms Miranda Baldwin

Head of Primary: Ms Joanna Chick



26 February 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope you and your families are keeping safe and well. I know, like us, that you have been eagerly awaiting the news that your child can return to school. I am delighted to say that the government have announced that all pupils will return to school from Monday 8th March 2021.

The DFE have published comprehensive and timely guidance for schools which can be found [here](#) and for parents [here](#). Having had time to consider the most recent guidance, **the key message is that with system controls, testing arrangements for secondary pupils and staff and protective measures we are able to reopen for all pupil from the 8th March. All primary pupils will start on Monday 8th March and secondary pupils will have a specific start date on the week commencing 8th March as detailed below.**

We believe that all systems of controls are essential and the way in which we are implementing them will ensure that we continue to offer a full, broad and balanced curriculum. We have reviewed our risk assessment in line with the current guidance and some of the key pieces of information are outlined below.

## Covid-19 Lateral Flow tests

Please see my letter sent to secondary parents on Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> February and ensure you have given consent by submitting a Google form using the link here (<https://forms.gle/VfWkZVbw54TgeVwv9>).

## Return to school dates and date of initial lateral flow Covid-19 Test

Year group and phase group specific letters will be sent out next week outlining full details on the return to school but in the meantime I want to share a brief overview of dates so families can plan appropriately.

Year Group	First Covid Test Date	Date of return to face to face learning
R to Year 6	Not applicable	Monday 8 <sup>th</sup> March
Year 7	Tuesday 9 <sup>th</sup> March (am)	Tuesday 9 <sup>th</sup> March
Year 8	Wednesday 10 <sup>th</sup> March (am)	Wednesday 10 <sup>th</sup> March
Year 9	Tuesday 9 <sup>th</sup> March (pm)	Wednesday 10 <sup>th</sup> March
Year 10	Monday 8 <sup>th</sup> March (pm)	Tuesday 9 <sup>th</sup> March
Year 11	Thursday 4 <sup>th</sup> March	Monday 8 <sup>th</sup> March

## Start and finish time

As you know we had planned some changes to start and finish times for all pupils in before we broke up at Christmas. These changes will now take place on our return. It is important that you read the letters being sent next week carefully to ensure you have the correct times for your child.

## Face Coverings

The DFE recommends the use of face coverings in secondary schools be extended to all indoor environments, "including classrooms", for a "limited period" until Easter. **Please ensure that your child comes to school with two face masks each day for use in the classroom.** We are no longer able to provide masks for pupils who forget them but will provide all pupils with an additional SMA yellow branded snood for wearing as a face covering in communal spaces such as the corridors, line up and in the canteen.

### Attendance

School attendance will be mandatory again from your child's return date. This means from that point, the usual rules on school attendance will apply.

### Transport

Having witnessed the high volume of bus usage last term, I ask that you really do consider other means of school travel. We ask that you encourage your child to walk or cycle to avoid public transport if possible but we understand that many of you will want to drop your child to school. Please do not stand at the gates to see them in and please assist us in following government guidance on social distancing.

### School uniform

All pupils will return in full school uniform and in the secondary phase pupils must also wear their ID and lanyards. It is important that all uniform is washed regularly. Please also ensure your child's hair colour and style is in line with our Academy policy and all jewellery is removed.

### What is a SMA Year group bubble?

- Pupils in each year group will be able to mix with each other but must not come into contact with pupils from another year group – therefore year groups will start and finish at different times of the day and lunchtimes will be staggered
- Reception, KS1, KS2 & KS3 pupils will spend most of their time in one classroom with minimal movement throughout the day
- Primary pupils will have the same teacher and TA each day
- KS3 pupils will have the full range of subject teachers but will be taught in the same ability groups for all lessons
- KS4 pupils will move between classrooms in mostly in one zone of the building
- Class sizes will be as normal (ranging between 15 to 28 depending on the year groups and subject)
- Children will work in well ventilated rooms – they will be spread out in the room making full use of all available space
- Pupils should arrive with all equipment and books they need for the day
- Bags, coats etc. should be kept to a minimum as there will be no storage
- Lunch spaces, PE changing rooms and other specialist rooms will be thoroughly cleaned between use by different year groups
- There will be a limited lunch service (for KS2 – 4 the focus will be on grab and go items such as hot paninis, sandwiches, hot pasta and rice pots, salad boxes etc.)

### Protective Measures

- Our full risk assessment has been carried out and reviewed
- Pupils have had contact with staff through this period of lockdown and have had regular well-being checks
- Bubble year groups will continue to be assigned specific entrances, exits and learning areas
- The behaviour policy will still be in full operation and any students breaking social distancing bubble rules may be isolated and then sent home for their safety and safety of others
- Heightened awareness of hygiene and cleaning will be in action at all times
- Deep cleans will continue to be carried out each evening
- Measures will be taken to continue to improve ventilation for example by opening doors and windows.
- All teachers and other staff will operate across different classes and year groups in order to facilitate the delivery of the school timetable
- For individual and very frequently used equipment, such as pencils and pens, staff and pupils should have their own items that are not shared

- Classroom based resources, such as books and games, can be used and shared within each year group; these should be cleaned regularly, along with all frequently touched surfaces
- Resources that are shared between classes or bubbles, such as sports, art and science equipment should be cleaned frequently, meticulously and always between bubbles
- Teachers will continue to move from class to class and students will stay in static areas to maintain distance and to limit interaction with other 'year bubbles'
- When movement does occur a one-way system will be in operation with specified year group entrances and exits
- Regular handwashing will be vital and where this is not possible the use of hand sanitiser

#### As a parent how can I help?

- **If your child has coronavirus symptoms or someone else in their household does, they should not attend school**
- Symptoms are: a new continuous cough or a high temperature, or has a loss of, or change in, their normal sense of taste or smell
- Ensure your child has washed their hands before leaving in the morning and on arriving home
- Ensure your child is on time for the staggered start to the day
- If you are bringing your child to school please drop and go, and do not stop and chat outside the gates
- At pick up time please be prompt but socially distance from others while waiting
- Send any messages for teachers via the school office phone number/email rather than when picking up your child – the reception will not be open to parents

#### What happens if there is a confirmed case?

- The child/staff member who has COVID 19 would self-isolate for 10 full days, with rest of household isolating for 10 full days
- The Lewisham Public Health team will advise on action to be taken by the Academy including who must be sent home to self-isolate
- All families must engage with the NHS Test and Trace process ([here](#))

I am sure that you can appreciate that the government and DFE guidance is a continually evolving picture and the plan is subject to change in order to incorporate further updates and advice when received. We remain committed to providing the best education possible for your child and we can't wait to have pupils back in school. We have been so impressed with the efforts and levels of commitment from our pupils during this period of remote learning and the fantastic support they are receiving from you at home during this difficult time.

Please do not hesitate to contact me, if you have any queries or suggestions.

We thank you for your continued support

Yours faithfully,



**Ms M Baldwin**  
Headteacher