



St. Thomas More High School

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Dear Parents and Carers,

I am writing to you this afternoon as we have now completed our first full week of testing on site. The team of trained staff have overseen the completion of lateral flow tests for students prior to their return to school and I want to thank all of you and your sons/daughters for your incredible support in this aspect of our response to the pandemic and the preparation to re-open fully to all students tomorrow. The overall response has been incredible, attendance has been over 97% for all years groups and thank you for booking tests at your local community sites and keeping travel at a minimum. The Government have asked schools to support and facilitate a programme of supervised testing prior to moving twice weekly testing to take place at home.

It has been wonderful to welcome our students back to school and hear laughter and chat and the sounds of learning taking place in classrooms face to face with staff. We look forward to seeing Year 7 and 8 return tomorrow. Next week, we will continue with the programme of testing between 8am and 10.30am for those students who have consent and minimise the disruption to lessons as much as possible.

The home testing kits have now been received from the NHS and will be given to your son/daughter next week during the school day. Each student will be given two boxes, each box containing everything that is needed for three tests plus an instruction booklet. Please also see the attached guide. Students will be asked to sign to state they have received these items even if you have not given consent for testing. This will allow students to home test twice weekly on a Sunday and Wednesday. Once each test is completed, the result should be sent to <https://www.gov.uk/report-covid19-result> as per the instructions in the booklet, and also to the School for our own records using the [Student COVID Test Outcome Form](#). If your child tests positive, please keep him or her at home.

If your son or daughter displays any symptoms of COVID 19, they should NOT come into school but you should arrange for them to be tested as soon as possible at a local testing site.

If by the end of next week your son or daughter has been in school but does not bring the boxes home, I would be grateful if you could send an email to office@st-thomasmore.southend.sch.uk

Here, you will find a YouTube link to a short film which shows [How to do a COVID-19 Self-Test](#)

As we are now re-opening for all students, here are some reminders about a few important matters to help the transition back into our normal school day:

- Ensure that your child's School Gateway account is topped up for school lunches and breakfast.
- Wearing of face coverings on school and public transport is compulsory (unless exempt)
- Face coverings are also now required to be worn once students enter the school site and throughout the school day unless exempt
- School uniform will need to be worn.
- The school day begins at 8.40am and ends for Year 12 & 13 at 1.20pm; Year 10 and 11 at 3.10pm; Year 7 – 9 at 3.20pm.
- Please check the weekly newsletter 'Contact' for information about after school clubs which will slowly begin to resume from next week to provide wraparound care for parents.
- I understand that shops and hairdressers are closed now, so I appreciate there may be some difficulties with ensuring compliance with school expectations for uniform and hair (see Student Planner Code of Conduct). However, after the Easter holiday, we will expect all students to conform to our expectations for their personal appearance and school uniform. Please do contact Mr Maxfield if you wish to donate items or make use of the 'Pre-Loved Uniform' stock that we have at school.

I understand that there may be some anxieties and concerns about returning to school on a full-time basis but, rest assured that we are doing everything possible to minimise the risk of transmission in school and this will be emphasised throughout lessons and through assemblies over the coming weeks. Please could I ask for your support in talking to your children to ensure they understand their responsibility by washing hands regularly and sanitising, keeping and maintaining social distance both in and out of school and by wearing a face mask throughout the school day. The most important thing to us over their first few days back, is to allow students to re-engage with school and to spend time meeting their friends, getting used to a normal school day and make progress towards achieving the very best they can throughout the rest of this year.

Finally, thank you for your continued support. It really has been lovely to see your sons and daughters return to school over the past couple of days and I know, having spoken to a number of them, they are looking forward to having some semblance of normality back in their lives.

Yours sincerely



Mrs G Ackred
Headteacher