



12th March 2021

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Dear Parent/Carers

It is fantastic to have all the students back in school today. Over the past week they have conducted themselves brilliantly, coping with testing, COVID rules and the return to live lessons. By the end of Monday, we should have completed our mass testing programme and the normal rhythm of school should return.

In-School testing

In the last 8 school days we have completed over 4,000 tests with the last tests due to take place on Monday. At the time of writing, there has only been one positive case. As a result of this a small number of staff in the Progress department are having to isolate which may affect face to face LSA support for some of our EHCP students in some lessons next week.

Student Home testing

Please see separate letter with detailed instructions regarding home testing for students. In line with government instructions we are asking students to test twice a week. Results need to be reported to both the NHS and the school. The home testing kits will be distributed on Monday, with each student receiving 2 packs of 3 tests. For next week we ask students in Years 8 - 13 to test Tuesday and Friday morning and Year 7 to test on Thursday morning. The following week the pattern should become Monday and Thursday morning for all students.

Awarding of Summer Grades for Year 11 and 13

We have issued provisional information regarding awarding grades to the specific year groups whilst we wait for the detailed guidance from exam boards. We have had several questions and queries and we are providing students with as much information and reassurance as possible. The school is keen to provide an opportunity for students to get the best possible grades by using summer assessments and appropriately using prior data to protect students from the impact of the pandemic disruption. As soon as we have received the exam board guidance and materials, we will confirm the details.

New Build

The new build project is continuing at pace. With the contractor, we are working hard to bring forward the completion date so that the builders are completely off site for the start of the new academic year. You may have seen we have used 3 of the 5 INSET days at the start of September to complete the unpacking and avoid any lost time for students across the school year.

We are also hugely pleased to say that we have now reached our fundraising target to re-furnish the block! With the help of the PTA and our extremely generous parents and community, not only will

we have 23 beautiful new rooms, they will be kitted out with lovely new furniture. Thank you so much, September should be really exciting as staff and students get to use the new block.

As always, there is the next project to complete as we now move to fundraise for the outside spaces, we are looking to provide some covered spaces and outdoor seating.

Catch-up

I am dubious about the use of the terminology. The impact of the lockdown will have affected students in different ways, some may have struggled with home learning whilst we know others may have enjoyed the independent online learning more. Whilst I firmly believe learning in school is the best place to be, I hope that working together we have minimised any gaps. Terms like ‘lost year’ risk becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy and undermine the hard work students have put in to their online learning.

Having said that, we are keen to make sure that gaps are addressed. Teachers have adjusted the curriculum to make sure that topics have been appropriate for online learning and now we are back in school the curriculum will adjust again to cover delayed items. We are also looking at a range of options to support students outside of lesson times and we believe this will need to focus on both academic and extra-curricular opportunities. We will issue further details when funding and plans are confirmed.

Well-being

The return to school may have been an anxious time for some students and we want to make sure students are well looked after. The students’ first port of call should be their form tutor and we strongly encourage them to share any worries they may have. Our Student Support department is also fully operational and are there to offer social and emotional support, we have also increased access to the school counsellor. Students can access Student Support by speaking to their tutor or emailing studentsupport@edgbarrowschool.co.uk.

Face coverings

The students have been brilliant and are wearing face coverings when inside. We know this isn’t always easy but we thank them for their support in helping to keep us all safe. The government are reviewing the position over the Easter holidays and we’ll provide updates when we receive them. We continue to remind students about Hands Face Space.

In what has been an incredibly busy couple of weeks, we remain incredibly grateful for the support and patience of our parents, carers and students. I would also like to thank all of our staff right across the school for their dedication, hard work and flexibility. By the end of Monday, we hope in-school disruption due to testing will be complete and our focus can return to delivering the best and broadest education we can.

Yours faithfully



Mr S Matthews
Headteacher