



1st March 2021

Dear Parents, Guardians and Carers,

Re: Students' Return to College

On Monday 22nd February, the Prime Minister announced that all students will return to full time schooling from **Monday 8th March**.

I am now writing to you to outline how we intend ensuring that De Salis Studio College remains as safe an environment as possible for all, and one that allows students to focus on the learning that now needs to continue in earnest. There are three areas for consideration:

1. Schools have been given the flexibility to 'stagger' the start dates for different Year groups. This is to ensure a smooth transition from online learning to face to face lessons, and to give an opportunity for expectations and routines to become quickly re-established.
2. The Department for Education require all students and staff to be tested, using our on-site Rapid Flow Testing facility, in the first week of return. Students will be tested three times and staff twice. After this, both students and staff will be provided with test kits to use at home, and testing in college will cease.
3. Maintaining health and safety on the college site, reducing the chance of transmission and therefore of the need for any isolation.

I will take these three considerations in turn:

1. Staggered Return to College

Please see below the dates and times for the **FIRST DAY ONLY** for each Year group. This staggered start allows for immediate testing on arrival, then the resumption of face to face lessons as per our usual timetable.

Year Group	Start Date	First Day Start Time:
Years 12 and 13	Monday 8 th March	10:00am
Year 11	Monday 8 th March	11:30am
Year 10	Tuesday 9 th March	11:30am
Year 9	Wednesday 10 th March	11:30am

Following each year groups' first day, they will each follow daily timings as follows for the rest of the Spring Term. These timings will be reviewed for the Summer Term.

Year Group	Start Time	End Time
Year 9	8:45am	4:00pm
Year 10	8:45am	4:30pm
Year 11	8:45am	5:00pm
Year 12	8:45am	4:00pm
Year 13	8:45am	4:00pm

On arrival, much like the Autumn Term, students arriving at De Salis Main Reception, will hand sanitise, queue at reception to be temperature checked and will then proceed to their form rooms, wearing masks and practising social distance.



Years 12 and 13 should pass through Main Reception, remembering to sanitise their hands take a temperature check and sign in before proceeding to the Post 16 form room for morning registration.

The DfE's guidance states that school attendance will be mandatory for all students from March 8th. The usual rules on attendance will apply, including your legal duty to secure your child's attendance at college. The ability to issue sanctions such as fines will also be reinstated, and we will be responsible for recording attendance, following up absence and reporting children missing their education to the local authority.

With the safety of all staff and students of paramount importance to us, the college is committed to implementing procedures that result in as secure an environment as possible. It is imperative that we all work together as a college community to adhere to the guidelines and encourage our young people to follow precisely the procedures devised to keep them, and their families, safe.

2. Rapid Flow Testing

The Department for Education requires all students and staff to be tested on-site for the *first week* of college. Thereafter, students and staff will be provided with kits for home testing. Testing for students is strongly encouraged, but not compulsory. Any objections to testing should be submitted in writing via the college email, unless this has already been received.

The College Rapid Flow Testing Site has been in operation at our sister college, Hewens College, since January and is secure, safe and efficient. We will ask students to pre-register for the tests before they arrive at college on their first day, and details as to how to do this will be communicated separately. The tests themselves involve a nasal swab, with results arriving to the registered mobile phone by text within 30 minutes. Any staff or students that test positive will be isolated and then sent home, where a follow-up PCR test will need to be administered to check the result. Positive cases will need to isolate for 10 days.

After their first test, students are required to be tested twice more during their first week in college.

3. Managing the College Site

Masks

Acting on current scientific advice, the government has decided that the wearing of masks will be **compulsory** for students in all lessons, at least until the end of this term. Therefore, every student should come to college wearing a mask, which is to be worn at all times except outside at break and lunch. This does not apply in situations where wearing a face covering would impact on the ability to take part in exercise or strenuous activity, for example in PE lessons. There are also exemptions for those who rely on visual signals for communication, or communicate with or provide support to such individuals.

We strongly suggest that parents, carers and guardians supply their children with at least three masks to carry with them at all times, in case of loss. We recommend the washable cloth masks as opposed to the blue disposable types. The college will **not** be providing spare masks for students that arrive without them.



How the college day will operate

The college timetable will largely run as it would have under normal circumstances, except that teachers will move to students rather than the other way around. This strategy aims to limit the amount of movement through corridors during the day.

Every classroom is effectively a learning bubble and will have a hand sanitizer station which staff and students will use on entering and leaving the room. The classrooms will be deep cleaned at the end of every day.

Assemblies and other such group events will continue to take place virtually, until it is deemed safe to remove these restrictions.

Arrival and departure

The college entrance is equipped with a temperature scanner that detects anomalies and alerts staff. Students with high temperatures (over 37.8 degrees) will be isolated and a pick-up requested.

At the end of the day the various year groups will leave at the allotted time and following the same route as in the morning.

Please can all parents, guardians and carers be reminded of safe drop off and collection of children on the pavement and road. Last term, the council had to intervene and request Traffic Attendants to monitor the road, as cars were parking on pavements and turning in the road. Not only did this create congestion, but it also posed a safety issue for pedestrians. Please can you drop off and collect your child at the correct time and move away from the site as soon as you are able to. Parents, carers and guardians should not walk onto site with their children.

Moving around the site

The college has areas set up to support hand sanitization all around the site. However, we cannot stress the importance of carrying and using personal hand sanitisers enough, especially for use en-route to and from the college. We request that student's watch how they sneeze and cough (CATCH IT – BIN IT – KILL IT); wash hands and uniform regularly; and walk at a safe distance from staff and students, avoiding unnecessary touching of surfaces and their peers. A collective effort will ensure we all remain safe.

Break and lunch times

Each year group will be segregated as a 'social bubble'. Students must not congregate or associate with students from other social bubbles, even if they are siblings. The segregated areas will be explained to the students on their first day back.

The canteen will be open and providing food using our new contactless payment system. If you have not yet received details of this, please let your child's form tutor know. However, we request students who are not entitled to free school meals to bring a packed lunch where possible to reduce the need for queuing.



Learning

Recognising that students have been away from school for a considerable amount of time, the teaching staff at De Salis have been working hard to devise a strategy of learning re-integration that will allow every student to get up to speed as quickly as possible, whilst also ensuring that adequate time and attention is given to their wellbeing.

The DfE have not yet released final details concerning the calculation of grades for students in Years 11 and 13. As soon as these are clarified, I will write to the students and families concerned.

Uniform and Equipment

Finally, all students must return to college in complete college uniform, including black leather school shoes. Please also ensure that your child(ren) come to college with the correct equipment and with any books they may have been using during lockdown. Treat this return like the start of a new school year.

All members of the staff team at De Salis are very much looking forward to welcoming our students back. There are many exciting plans ahead for the college site and for the opportunities that we will be able to provide for our students in the months and years to come. We have come through these unprecedented times together – we will move forward together.

Laptop Loans

If your child has been allocated a device, please continue to use this until the end of the academic year where you'll be asked to return these to the college. We will write in a separate communication to make these arrangements.

Yours faithfully,

Mr Donning



Assistant Principal

Mr Burke



Assistant Principal

Ms McMaster-Isaacs



Assistant Principal