



26th February 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

Full Reopening of Axe Valley Academy to all Students March 2021

I am writing to outline all of the information explaining the wider return of all students to Axe Valley Academy. Before I go any further, I want to reiterate just how grateful we are to all of our families across the community who have worked tirelessly to support remote education and to say how excited we are to see all of our students return.

There is a huge amount of information we want to share with our community to help explain our timeline and procedures for as safe a return as possible, as such this letter will be the first of two large letters you will find. This letter will outline the details related to the return of all pupils and the systems and guidance that will be in place in school. A second letter will follow next week relating to our curriculum and teaching and learning to support your child back into school and additional intervention. To try and make the information as accessible as possible, this letter will be divided into sections and include a summary of the key information at the end and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) page. As always if you would like any support in going through this information or you have any questions don't hesitate to contact us by telephone or email admin@axevalley.devon.sch.uk at your earliest convenience.

We have also included a section on what parents and carers can do now to help their child return as smoothly as possible. Please do take the time to go through this with your child and continue to support us in making sure we can get back to teaching our children as efficiently as possible. We are genuinely so excited to have Axe Valley fully open to everyone.

Return Dates

Below is a table showing the dates that all year groups will return to full face to face teaching and follow their usual timetable in school. As a reminder all students will need to arrive at the rear of school before the 8.45am first bell and make their way to their first lesson on their first day back. The week commencing the 8th March is a **Week 1**.

Year group	Date of return to lessons (Week 1)
Year 11	Tuesday 9 th March
Year 10	Tuesday 9 th March
Year 9	Wednesday 10 th March
Year 8	Wednesday 10 th March
Year 7	Thursday 11 th March

Chard Street, Axminster, Devon EX13 5EA
Tel: 01297 32146 Email: admin@axevalley.devon.sch.uk Web: www.axevalley.devon.sch.uk



The slightly staggered return will allow for the important asymptomatic testing for all students before they return in an additional measure to help keep our community safe. We have previously written with full details about the Lateral Flow device testing and asked for consent about testing and I am delighted that the majority of our school community has consented to be a part of these essential voluntary tests. Further information is again summarised below.

Across that week, for any year groups not yet in school full time, full remote learning will be set and will need to be completed by all students.

We have cancelled the INSET day scheduled for Thursday 1st April to make sure we maximise the time in school for students this term.

Asymptomatic Testing

Rapid testing using Lateral Flow Devices (LFDs) will support the return to face-to-face education by helping to identify people who are infectious but do not have any COVID-19 symptoms. All students will be offered 3 on-site tests, 3 to 5 days apart. Students will return to face-to-face education following their first negative test result. Students not undergoing testing should attend school in line with the phased return arrangements. After their initial 3 tests in school, students will then be supplied with LFD test kits to self-swab and test themselves twice a week at home. Testing is voluntary but strongly encouraged.

Below are the details of how your child should access their first LFD test before their return to school. They will be given a copy of their timetable at their appointment.

Year 11 Tutor group	Date of testing	Time of testing
11SD	Monday 8 March	09:00-10:00
11MBR	Monday 8 March	10:00-11:00
11NF	Monday 8 March	10:00-11:00
11BP	Monday 8 March	11:00-12:00
11AC	Monday 8 March	11:00-12:00

Year 10 Tutor group	Date of testing	Time of testing
10RW	Monday 8 March	13:00-14:00
10DC	Monday 8 March	13:00-14:00
10NR	Monday 8 March	14:00-15:00
10SMP	Monday 8 March	14:00-15:00

Year 9 Tutor group	Date of testing	Time of testing
9EC	Tuesday 9 March	09:00-10:00
9WB	Tuesday 9 March	10:00-11:00
9FM	Tuesday 9 March	10:00-11:00
9MI	Tuesday 9 March	11:00-12:00

Year 8 Tutor group	Date of testing	Time of testing
8DO	Tuesday 9 March	13:00-14:00
8FTD	Tuesday 9 March	13:00-14:00
8VM	Tuesday 9 March	14:00-15:00
8LM	Tuesday 9 March	14:00-15:00

Year 7 Tutor group	Date of testing	Time of testing
7DP	Wednesday 10 March	09:00-10:00
7JW	Wednesday 10 March	10:00-11:00
7EB	Wednesday 10 March	11:00-12:00
7AB	Wednesday 10 March	13:00-14:00
7STP	Wednesday 10 March	14:00-15:00

Arrangements for the first LFD test before returning

Your child should arrive through the canteen gate at the rear of school (Flamingo Pool entrance) wearing a face covering and adhering to social distancing guidance. They will not be allowed to enter through the front entrance. Parents can use the rear car park to wait for their child. Please remain in your vehicle whilst you await their return. They should make their way to the main hall where there will be clear markings and they will be greeted by staff to be registered for their test. They will leave through the rear of school immediately after testing and should go straight home.

We will also be running an out of school hours testing slot each day from 4-6pm for any parents who cannot arrange to transport their child in during the day. These can happen on the day your child's tutor group was due in and can be booked by contacting Mrs Ford admin@axevalley.devon.sch.uk.

Guidance in Place on Return to School

Face coverings

Face coverings will continue to be worn by adults and students when moving around the premises, outside of classrooms, such as in corridors and communal areas where social distancing cannot easily be maintained. Face coverings do not need to be worn by students when in their designated playground areas or when seated in the canteen. In addition, in line with Department for Education guidance, face coverings will be worn in classrooms or during activities where social distancing cannot be maintained. This will not apply in situations where wearing a face covering would impact on the ability to take part in exercise, for example PE lessons. These measures will be in place until Easter. Students who are exempt from wearing a face covering must wear an exemption lanyard.

Travelling to school

We would like to encourage as many students as possible to walk or cycle to school. If parents are dropping their students at the rear of the school, it is essential that parents do not leave their vehicles. Devon County Council has confirmed that normal school transport will be running, and we

have circulated their guidance to parents which can be found at the link below. Devon County Council has confirmed that anyone travelling to school by bus should do so wearing a face covering. Students should also sit in year groups wherever possible on their bus.

<https://www.devon.gov.uk/educationandfamilies/school-information/school-and-college-transport>

Uniform

Students will be expected to wear full school uniform and bring their own equipment with them. The Uniform Policy is included in this letter and is available on the website. If students have PE on their timetable they must arrive in Axe Valley Academy PE uniform on those days and remain in that kit throughout the day. This will be their uniform on days where they have PE. They should have their normal full school uniform in their bags in case they need it on these days. Students will be allowed to wear their Axe Valley Academy PE hoodies, blazers or plain dark coats over their PE kits if they wish. It is essential that they wear Axe Valley Academy PE kit and not any other gym wear. No other hoodies will be allowed.

If your child is unwell

It is essential that for anyone displaying symptoms of coronavirus that they do not attend school and that you inform school immediately by telephone and seek a test as soon as possible. The main symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) are:

- a high temperature
- a new, continuous cough
- a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste

If your child takes a test please inform Axe Valley Academy of the result as soon as possible by sending their name and a copy of their test result to admin@axevalley.devon.sch.uk . You can find further information on symptoms and testing below:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/symptoms/>

[https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-and-tracing//](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-and-tracing/)

If your child comes into contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 they should self-isolate for 10 days. If a confirmed case is found at Axe Valley Academy, we will immediately liaise with Public Health England and NHS Test and Trace before communicating with parents of affected students to advise of next steps.

Separate year groups

We will endeavour to keep our year groups as separate as possible throughout the school day and their areas have been listed below. Students must not mix with students from other year groups.

- Year 7 - They will enter and exit through the bus park gates. They will use the quad toilets only. Their canteen has returned to the main canteen. They will have social time in the Year 7 area.

- Year 8 - They will enter and exit through the bus park gates. They will use the quad toilets only. Their canteen has returned to the main canteen. Year 8 will have social time in the space outside History in the Year 8 area.
- Year 9 - They will enter and exit through the canteen gates only. They will use the C block toilets only. Their canteen will be located in the rear canteen where Love Joe's is situated. Year 9 will have social time in the music quad area.
- Year 10 - They will enter and exit through the canteen gates only. They will use the C block toilets only. Their canteen will be located in the rear canteen where Love Joe's is situated. Year 10 will have social time in the Year 10 area.
- Year 11 - They will enter and exit through the C Block gates only. They will use the L block toilets only. Their canteen will be located in the main hall. Year 11 will have social time in area between the sports hall and technology block and the hall itself.

Students will be expected to move around the site, to follow their timetable, maintaining awareness of the social distancing expectations. We will ask students to move around the site in single file and ask them to adhere to the one-way systems in place. There will be markings on the floors, both outdoors and inside, to help students to remember the expectations and to stay safe. Changeover times and an adjusted structure to the school day will continue to prevent congestion in corridors. All students will line up outside of the buildings at all times. For hand and respiratory hygiene, we will continue to provide hand sanitiser for use on entry and exit to all teaching rooms. Antiviral spray and wipes will be provided in each classroom. We will continue to insist on good hand washing routines to include washing vigorously for 20 seconds with soap and water, and more often than usual. We will also continue to reinforce good respiratory hygiene using the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach where lidded bins are available in all classrooms.

There will be a full year group assembly on the first morning that each year group is back in school to go through the guidance in detail.

Timings of the School Day

Students are to arrive for 8.45am at the rear of school. On arrival to school on the first day students will be asked to move directly to their first timetabled lesson. The start and finish times of the school day will remain the same with the slightly adjusted timings. A reminder of these timings is shown below.

Arrival	08:45
Lesson 1	08:50-09:50
Lesson Changeover	09:50
Lesson 2	09:55-10:55
Morning Break	10:55-11:15
Lesson 3	11:15-12:15
Lunchtime	12:15-12:40

Registration	12:40-13:05
Lesson Changeover	13:05
Lesson 4	13:10-14:10
Afternoon Break	14:10-14:25
Lesson 5	14:25-15:25

What Can Parents do Now?

We understand what a huge challenge remote learning has been for our families and so we hope parents will support us by doing everything in their power to support a smooth return to face-to-face education. We've put a few ideas below that might help. It has been particularly hard to maintain routines for all of us and so getting these back must be a priority for us all!

1. Talk about returning

Go through any worries or concern with your child and get in touch if we can help. Reinforce just how excited we are to have them all back.

2. Check uniform

Try on all uniform and PE kit. Check it all still fits and get the first day's uniform ready. Make sure school shoes are ready by the front door too! Check that all extra piercings have been removed and that hair is a natural colour in line with our policy.

3. Ensure AGP Footwear

Check that your child has the correct AGP footwear. We can't wait to get back to PE and sport and clubs and so this is vital. If you have any questions about appropriate footwear contact Mr Owen dowen@axevalley.devon.sch.uk.

4. Pack the first day bag

Make sure that your child has their essential school equipment all ready including a pen, pencil, ruler, calculator, reading book, face coverings and a water bottle.

5. Reminder about mobile phones

Remind your child that there is absolutely no screen time during the school day and that phones should be off and in their school bags. Any mobile phones used in school will be confiscated and taken to reception until the end of the school day.

6. Start encouraging going to bed a little earlier

As a parent we dream of an enforced bedtime. As a child it can feel like a punishment but it is essential we get children back into a routine of enough quality sleep. Start to bring back bedtime until it is appropriate for a school night.

7. Start helping getting up a little earlier

Having to be out of the house ready for the school bus could be a huge shock to the system for many who have been able to sleep in later and so trying to make sure routines are back in place next week on a school day morning will help.

8. Lanyards

If your child is exempt from wearing a face covering please make sure they have the lanyard that they can wear on their return.

If you have any concerns about your child's return to school please contact your child's Year Leader or the Learning Support department at your earliest opportunity so that we can put in place enhanced transition plans.

Years 7 & 8– Mr Rupert Carr rcarr@axevalley.devon.sch.uk

Years 9 & 10 – Mr Greg Horn ghorn@axevalley.devon.sch.uk

Year 11 – Mrs Emily Ward eward@axevalley.devon.sch.uk

SENDCo – Mrs Gill Cooper gcooper@axevalley.devon.sch.uk

FAQs

Does my child have to attend school?

Yes. The Government advice is very clear on this and everyone needs to attend school every day and on time. The only exceptions are where specific medical advice has been given to a student. The family of any student in this category must contact the school to discuss arrangements for their child's education.

What are the main ways in which Axe Valley Academy will try and ensure safety for students?

- A full risk assessment has been carried out and verified by an external provider, Local Governing Committee and Directors of Uffculme Academy Trust. An additional UAT quick reference guide has been published and is available on our website.
- Your child will spend most of their time at school in a 'bubble' e.g. lesson time, break and lunchtimes. When moving from lesson to lesson, students may pass others around the school site. On the few occasions where it is difficult to maintain a year group bubble, students will be expected to stay socially distanced from others.
- Students must always line up for lessons outside of the buildings with their face coverings worn appropriately.
- Hand sanitisation stations will be available outside all classrooms and buildings and students will be required to use these prior to entry.
- Toilet blocks are allocated to separate groups of children and there will be increased cleaning of toilet facilities and other key areas around the school during the day.
- When students leave a classroom, the classroom will be cleaned by the teacher prior to next group of students arriving. There have been lesson changeover and break times added to allow for this to happen.
- The Canteen is being split into three venues for different year groups. There will be a restricted 'grab and go' menu choice.
- Year groups will have their own designated playground area.

Now my child is back at school should I return their laptop?

No. For now please use this to support homework and any remote learning.

Have the rules around face coverings changed?

Up to Easter students will also be wearing face coverings in the classroom where social distancing cannot be maintained, in line with the Government guidance. They will not be asked to wear their face coverings outdoors or when doing PE.

I think my child is exempt from wearing a face covering. What should I do?

You should let school know so that we can discuss supporting your child and keeping the school community safe. Your child should wear an exemption lanyard that you can get for them to make it clear that they are exempt. We do have a small number of children who have let us know that they are exempt and by wearing a clearly visible lanyard we are able to establish this easily. If you would like to talk this through please don't hesitate to contact your child's Year Leader or Mrs Cooper, SENDCo.

Should my child wear a face covering or face mask on the school bus?

It is a requirement to wear a face covering on the school bus and if you travel on public transport.

What are the rules on handwashing and hygiene?

Regular handwashing and/or sanitising is vital. When students arrive and leave school, they will be expected to sanitise their hands at the stations at the entrances. In addition, there will be hand sanitiser available outside every classroom. Students are expected to sanitise on arrival at lessons and when they are going to break or lunch. Tissues will be available in each classroom. If students sneeze/cough they are expected to use a tissue or to cover their mouth/nose with the crook of their arm. A used tissue must be placed in the specialist lidded bins immediately. Any subsequent sneezing should use fresh tissues. At all times, students are expected to avoid touching their face.

How many Lateral Flow Device Tests will my child have and do they have to have them?

All students will be offered 3 on site LFD tests. One will be before they return to school and the other two will follow 3-5 days apart each. After students have completed 3 tests on site they will be able to have home testing kits where they test twice a week at home. More information about the home testing will follow before the testing kits are made available to students. The testing is voluntary and doesn't happen without consent however we strongly advise students participate to help keep our community safe.

How do I know the results of the LFD tests?

The results will be sent as a text to your mobile phone number provided to the school.

Will staff work in the same way?

The Government have advised that staff should stay at the front of the class wherever possible and keep a two-metre distance where they can so students may notice some minor changes. Students that require additional support will continue to receive this support. Additionally, the Government has advised that desks should face the front wherever possible. Staff will be wearing face coverings routinely in classrooms where social distancing cannot be maintained.

What other equipment does my child need to bring in?

All students will need to bring in pens, pencils, a ruler, calculator, protractor, pair of compasses, highlighters, etc as normal. We will be unable to share equipment with students, other than a small supply of emergency equipment which will be sanitised after use, due to the risk of infection and they will not be allowed to share equipment with other people in their class. Please help your son or daughter to ensure they have everything they need by checking with them the night before. This should include a face covering, water bottle and their AGP boots.

Does the normal school behaviour policy apply?

Students are expected to follow the normal rules that we have in school and we will maintain our highest expectations of behaviour. They should be respectful of all other students and staff. If students don't behave appropriately, we follow our usual behaviour policy of a warning before using the Ready to Learn system. There will be severe sanctions for students who refuse to follow the social distancing and hygiene measures due to the risk they pose to others. Any intentional attempt to infect others, including coughing or spitting at others or on their equipment, will be treated as a serious breach of the behaviour policy and serious sanctions will be applied. We reserve the right to refer these incidents to the police.

My child dyed their hair during lockdown. Do I need to change this?

Our school uniform policy will be applied and as such only natural hair colours are permitted. If you would like any advice around permissible hair colours please don't hesitate to contact your child's Year Leader.

Will there be assemblies?

Year group assemblies will take place but larger gatherings will not.

My child has been coming into school during lockdown as they are in the key worker, vulnerable or SEND group. Can they still come in during the week commencing 8th March?

Students of key workers, vulnerable and SEND students who have been attending school during lockdown will continue to come into school on the days required until they return to full time face-to-face lessons depending on which year group they are in. Students will be tested during their allocated tutor group time slot.

Are there changes for me if I need to visit school site as a parent?

Yes. We will be asking that visits made to the school by members of the public are kept to a minimum. Please consider whether your visit is absolutely necessary and whether you can make contact with us in any other way. Any visit to the school must be made through an arranged appointment. For safety we are continuing with the following regulations to help ensure that we maintain a COVID-secure environment for all:

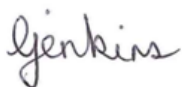
1. If you or anyone in your household is displaying symptoms of COVID-19 then you must not visit the school.
2. Visits will be restricted to those which are essential.

3. All visitors must sign in on arrival and give their email address and phone number to enable visitors to be tracked and traced should the need arise.
4. All visitors must also sign a disclaimer stating that they have not visited any countries not included on the travel corridor list within the last 14 days and that they are not displaying symptoms of COVID-19.
5. All visitors must follow current guidance relating to social distancing.
6. Visitors must wear a face covering whilst on site and sanitise their hands on arrival.

Summary

- **We can't wait to see everyone back in school!**
- From Monday 8th March all students should come into school for one LFD test at their designated tutor group time **before** their return to school
- Years 11 and 10 will return to full time face to face lessons on **Tuesday 9th March**
- Years 9 and 8 will return to full time face to face lessons on **Wednesday 10th March**
- Years 7 will return to full time face to face lessons on **Thursday 11th March**
- Across the week commencing 8th March **remote learning** will continue for all students not yet in school
- Students of key workers, vulnerable and SEN students who have been attending school during lockdown will continue to come into school on the days required.
- Face coverings will be worn in all indoor areas where social distancing can't be maintained, including classrooms.
- Students must wear **full school uniform** upon their return
- Students should continue to wear **PE uniform on PE days**.
- The INSET day on Thursday 1st April is **cancelled**


Yours sincerely



Laura Jenkins
Headteacher

Uniform

PE kit is only to be worn on days when practical PE is on the student's timetable and it must be Axe Valley Academy kit. Non AVA hoodies are not permitted – not even black hoodies. Students need to wear an AVA PE jumper or hoodie, black school jumper and/or blazer. Black sports leggings or plain black joggers are permitted for PE.



Axe Valley Academy - Uniform Code

Ties: AVA clip-on ties are compulsory for all students

Blazer: Black, with Axe Valley Academy badge in gold embroidery

Trousers: If trousers are worn they must be plain and black (flares, tight fitting/straight leg and denim trousers are not permitted, this also includes trousers that have exposed zips and poppers).


Shoes: Sensible, plain, flat, sturdy, leather and black-soled black footwear is essential.

Tights: Tights must be plain, black and in good order

Skirts: If skirts are worn they must be the official Axe Valley Academy blue and gold skirt. The length must be no more than 2 inches above the knee

Socks: Socks must be plain and black.

Shirt/blouse: Plain white shirt that must be tucked in, with a formal collar. All top buttons must be fastened. All shirts must be tucked in.



Other uniform expectations

Make-up: Make-up, if worn, should be discreet. Artificial nails (including gel nails) will not be permitted. Students are not permitted to wear nail varnish.

Hairstyles: Hair colouring needs to be natural and discreet. Extremes of colour and styles are not permitted.

Coats/Jackets: It is acceptable to wear a coat or jacket over blazers. These must not be worn instead of blazers. Hooded jumpers are not permitted.

Facial piercing: Facial piercing is not permitted.

Jewellery: One pair of small stud earrings/sleepers. Students are allowed to wear one ring. No other jewellery is acceptable.

Belts: Belts must be plain and black.