



December 18th 2020

Revised January Return Arrangements

Dear Parents and Carers

I am really sorry to be having to communicate changes to January return arrangements at such a late stage.. At 6.30 p.m. yesterday, the Department for Education issued new guidance to schools for returning in January. You have probably heard in the news that students will have a staggered return and the details are set out below.

Although it is extremely frustrating to receive guidance so late in the day, I do believe it is sensible to reduce the numbers returning on January 5th, with priority given to exam year groups and students in need of our Priority Provision. I also believe there will be some very real benefits to the proposals for testing in schools once we get back to our normal routines – in particular, students and staff who have been in contact with a positive case will no longer have to self-isolate but can opt instead to be tested daily. None of this will happen until we are sure we can implement the proposals safely and no testing will happen without your consent, so please do not worry at this stage. We are only just getting details of how this will all work and I will be in touch as soon as we return to school to give you more detailed information.

Students' Return to School

Monday January 4th : Whole Staff INSET Day, no students in school

Tuesday January 5th – Friday January 8th :

Year 11 full return to school as planned

Years 12 & 13 return to school for Exams only

Years 7, 8, 9, 10 remote learning for all students other than those who attend Priority Provision (see below)

Monday January 11th :

Full return to school for all year groups, subject to safe staffing levels

Free School Meals

If your child is entitled to Free School Meals, you will be issued with a voucher for the week commencing January 4th. Vouchers will be issued when we return to school on Monday January 4th or Tuesday January 5th.



Remote Learning Arrangements & ICT Support

All remote learning will be set on Class Charts and will be labelled Blended Learning. Students will follow their usual timetable with 3 lessons set every day. If your child needs assistance with their work, they can contact their class teacher via e-mail in the first instance.

Further details will follow in January setting out how we will continue to support your child during the first week of term, through on-line assemblies and contact with their Form Tutor.

We are keen to ensure every single student has access to ICT to complete their remote learning. If your child needs use of a laptop device or internet access, you can let us know by contacting the school Main Reception on Monday January 4th.

Priority Provision

School will be open to students in all year groups who fall into the following categories:

- Children of Key Workers
- Children who are deemed vulnerable in line with DFE guidance

If you are a Key Worker and require Priority Provision for your child / children from Tuesday January 5th – Friday January 9th, please complete the request form using this link: <https://bit.ly/3oYxHBO>. Please complete a separate form for each of your children if you require more than one place.

If your child is deemed vulnerable, you will receive a letter and a text message from us letting you know that we are expecting to see your child in school on Tuesday January 5th. If you receive this letter /message and have a concern about your child attending during that week, please contact school on Monday January 4th to discuss.

Priority Provision will be delivered in Year Groups and will follow the times of the usual school day, finishing at 2.35pm for Years 7 & 9 and 2.45pm for Years 8, 10, 11, 12 and 13.

COVID-19 Testing in Schools

You may have seen the announcement yesterday that students and staff will have access to mass testing in school from January.

Specifically, the information and guidance we have received tells us :

- i) staff will have access to weekly tests (with results taking 30 minutes)
- ii) staff and students who are identified as contacts of someone who has tested positive can be tested daily for 7 consecutive days as an alternative to self-isolation and can remain in school if they test negative.

All testing is completely optional – no member of staff or student will be required to take any test without full consent. All of our social distancing measures will continue throughout next term in addition to any new testing arrangements.



The proposal for testing is likely to bring huge benefits by reducing the need for self-isolation. The test will also reduce the risk of coronavirus across our community by identifying staff and students who may be carrying the virus without any symptoms.

I fully support the aim of this proposal but like many others, am angry and frustrated about the timing of the information and the lack of detail. The first training session to help us implement the guidance that was issued yesterday takes place at 1pm today so I hope to know more by the end of the day!

It looks likely that we will be seeking volunteers to assist with the testing regime and I will be in touch early in January to see if we have anyone among our parent/carer community who is able to assist. As things stand, we need greater clarity about the logistics and details before we launch anything and we will only do so once we are sure it is safe for everyone involved.

Please note, COVID reporting and safeguarding support over the Christmas break are still in place as per my letter yesterday.

Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Emma Leaman
Headteacher