

30 December 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

I write to confirm that the school will remain closed to all students (with the exception of those who the school has confirmed are categorised as vulnerable or key worker children or will sit external examinations) until Monday 11 January 2021 whilst the school prepares to undertake mass lateral flow testing. This follows the DfE announcements made in relation to mass testing for Year 11 and Year 13 students as part of the drive to reduce transmission rates by identifying positive cases where individuals do not have symptoms of COVID-19.

Remote learning will be provided for Year 11 and Year 13 students only during the first week of the Spring term, from Tuesday 5 to Friday 8 January inclusive, and so if your child is in Year 7, 8, 9, 10 or 12 they will not be expected to undertake any formal learning during this week.

Families of the small number of students who have confirmed on-site provision during the first week of term will be notified individually. The students who will be attending school will include those who are sitting external vocational examinations, which will take place as scheduled and the Exams team will contact students directly on Monday 4 January to confirm arrangements.

From Tuesday 5 January 2021, all students in Year 11 and Year 13 will be offered a lateral flow test in school. According to statistics, up to one third of people who have coronavirus do not experience any symptoms. By testing in school, we will help to reduce the spread of the virus and so we would encourage as many students as possible to accept the offer of the lateral flow test. The testing is mandatory and, if students choose not to undergo the test, they will not be able to return to school on Monday 11 January. Further information around this method of testing will be sent to the families of Year 11 and to Year 13 students via email separately.

For Year 11 and Year 13 students who return to school on Monday 11 January 2021, there are no changes to timetabled lessons and the school day will run as the normal routine. The catering service will be available before school, during break and lunch although choice will be limited. School buses will operate as timetabled.

Year 13 mock exams are planned to go ahead as scheduled during week commencing 11 January with the Year 12 mock exams being delayed slightly.

All students in Years 7, 8, 9, 10 and 12 will remain at home and undertake blended learning during the second week of term, Monday 11 to Friday 15 January 2021. Students should follow their normal timetable during this week and attend their scheduled lessons remotely.

Direct payments for the first two weeks of the term will be processed for those families across the school who are currently entitled to free school meals.

We will contact you again during the week beginning 11 January to confirm arrangements for the wider return of all remaining students from week commencing 18 January 2021. This update will include details for the testing of all returning students, following which we anticipate that the Spring term will continue as planned.

Once all of our students have returned to school, we will also be offering serial contact testing which will allow those who have been identified as close proximity contacts of positive cases to return to school if they agree to be tested for the seven days following their last contact with the positive case.

This means that a lateral flow test can be taken at the beginning of each day for seven days and, if the result is negative, those students will be able to remain in school. Further information around this will be sent to all families in due course.

I appreciate that the arrangements outlined above may cause some challenges for a number of families but we are confident that the staggered start to the Spring term will give us the space and time to set up effective testing for staff and students, which will ultimately help to reduce the transmission of the virus and keep our staff, students and wider community as safe as possible.



Pepe Di'lasio  
Headteacher