

18th December 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

Urgent Information regarding the return to school in January

Partial Closure of School week beginning 4th January 2021

The Government announced yesterday (17th December) that in the week beginning 4th Jan, Years 7, 8, 9, 10 and 12 will not be attending school (other than vulnerable students and children of critical workers) but will be learning remotely. It is clear that this is a partial 'firebreak', based on predictions that cases will rise after Christmas. Keeping only exam classes in school will reduce transmissions as students return to school after wider community contact over the holiday.

Students in Years 11 and 13 should return to school on 5th January as usual. Vulnerable students and children of critical workers may also choose to return to school for live learning. Definitions of vulnerable students and critical workers can be found here:

[Definition of a vulnerable student and critical worker](#)

From 5th January, all students that are in school will attend their normal lessons with the normal teacher, even if there are only very low numbers of students in the classroom. All students learning from home will attend the same lesson via Teams.

Years 11 and 13

We expect all year 11s and 13s to attend school as normal. Any absences should be reported in the usual way.

Years 7-10 and 12 who wish to attend school

Can all parents/carers of children in years 7-10 and 12 who are eligible and who want their child to attend school please complete this form. [Click here](#) to access the form.

Help with IT equipment for students learning from home

If your child is learning from home but you need to borrow a laptop from school, please use the same form above to inform us of your need. We will try to provide what you need as soon as possible.

We were as surprised as you are by this announcement. However, we are in a good place to deliver education because of the move to Teams in October. We look forward to welcoming all students back to school on Monday 11th January 2021.

Covid testing in schools

Alongside the announcement of a partial school closure is a request to schools to set up Covid testing on site. We are being asked to consider two types of testing:

1. One-off testing of staff and students as they return to school after the holiday to check that there are no positive cases on site.
2. Having daily testing on site should anyone become positive at a later date, to prevent contacts of the positive cases having to self-isolate.

As I write to you:

- There are no test kits in school yet
- No one has been trained in administering the tests or how to complete associated paperwork

- Testing could require additional staff capacity and none has yet been recruited, nor are there any plans centrally (nationally or locally) to recruit testers. Schools are being asked to recruit their own staff for this.

I can see the positive reasons for having testing: to reduce cases and to keep people in school instead of self-isolating. However, there are many questions as yet unanswered regarding safety of carrying out testing on site ourselves. Because of the lack of information, we are waiting to decide whether or not to introduce testing on site. What we do know is that any testing that is introduced will be voluntary and parental permission will be required. I will keep you informed as I know more. [The full guidance available currently is here.](#)

The Government advice says that more information will be provided during the next few days. It is likely that I will need to write to parents/carers during the holiday. Whilst I do not want to disturb your celebrations, I do want you to have as much notice as possible of any changes as events develop.

If you do wish your year 7-10 or 12 child to attend school, please complete the form linked here by 6pm Friday 1st January.

Merry Christmas and best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "R Shadbolt". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'R'.

Mr R Shadbolt
Headteacher