December 2020

Dear Parent and Carer

You will probably have seen or read the news stories this week about schools and colleges being asked to implement a phased start to the spring term, and being invited to set up a mass COVID testing programme for pupils and staff. We are writing to you to explain how we, as a school, intend to respond to these extremely last-minute government requests.

We will follow the government guidance on how to phase the start of term, which is intended to ensure effective education can continue but also reduces the spread of the virus as pupils and staff return after Christmas.

We are positive about the potential for the mass testing of pupils and staff in schools, as a way of reducing the spread of the virus and enabling fewer pupils and staff to have to self-isolate. You can read more about how the government expect this programme to work here: https://dfemedia.blog.gov.uk/2020/12/15/mass-testing-in-schools-your-questions-answered/

Setting up this programme in schools is an incredibly complex operation. We have been sent some information about how it should work already, but more detailed guidance is expected to be produced by the government over the Christmas holiday period.

We will not, therefore, be in position to have this programme up and running as soon as the spring term starts. At the start of term, we will review what the expectations are, what support is available from the government or other agencies, and what we can realistically and safely deliver for our school community.

I will write to you in the new year. You can rest assured we would never test a child without explicit and written permission from parents, and we will give you notice and an explanation of if, when and how these tests will take place.

The coming weeks and months will pose many more challenges and the only way forward is together. As always, I am thankful for your support and understanding.

Best wishes to you all over the holiday period.

M. Duncan

Monica Duncan
Principal