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30th December 2020

Dear Parents

I do apologise for having to write to you during the winter holidays, especially at such a late stage. However, this afternoon the DfE updated its guidance for the re-opening of schools in the new year and I wanted to outline how this will affect us at Oathall.

The term will start in a staggered way, with students in year 11 only returning to school from Monday 11th January for face-to-face lessons with their teachers. From Tuesday 5th January, year 11 students will be following their remote learning programme.

Students in years 7 to 10 will then return to Oathall on Monday 18th January.

Full details of the remote learning programme will follow.

On the 15th December, the government announced that from January, schools will have access to rapid flow testing for their teachers and students. These tests will help us to identify asymptomatic cases and so limit the spread of the virus. Daily testing of identified close contacts will also eliminate the need for self-isolation in the event of a negative test result, allowing them to continue to come to school.

We plan to fully engage with the delivery of this programme but putting in place robust procedures to administer these tests to our school community is no small task. We will be using the additional school closure day, granted by the DfE, on 4th January to ensure we are able to properly undertake this testing programme as soon as possible and to the standards that are required. Moreover, time will also be used by teaching staff on that day to make sure that all is in place to ensure the quality of our remote learning programme, as well as undertaking final training in the delivery of live-streamed lessons. Further details on the testing programme will be provided in the coming days.

Whilst the school will be closed for learning for the majority of students in years 7 through 10 until 18th January, we will, of course, continue to support on-site for those children of critical workers who feel that their children cannot work from home. We will also offer on-site support to those children for whom a particular need has been identified.

If you would like to request a critical worker place for your child(ren), can I ask that you contact us at keyworker@oathall.org giving details as appropriate; thank you.

Further information, giving details of the remote learning programme and the expectations for all year groups, will be sent shortly.

I will, of course, update you with any further news should things change over the coming days.

With kind regards

Edward Rodriguez