

December 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

Although I wrote to you last week detailing the end of term arrangements, you may be aware from the press that the Department for Education has made some last minute announcements regarding mass testing of school pupils and staff and the return to school in January. Based on the information we have so far:

The 4th January 2021 will now be an INSET day and pupils should not attend school. This is so that staff can be ready for the testing programme which will need to commence on 5th January. Further details about testing will be sent out as soon as possible.

From Tuesday 5th - Friday 8th January the school will only open for pupils in Year 11, Year 13, children of key workers and vulnerable pupils. All other pupils should remain at home and expect a staggered return with, initially, work set online through Google classroom. As the guidance around this becomes clearer, we will contact parents/carers with more detail. Students in all other year groups are expected back on site from Monday 11th January. **Students with external examinations in this first week back (Year 13 only) should be reassured that examinations will take place as normal.**

If you are a key worker and require your child(ren) in Year 7, 8, 9, 10 or 12 to attend school from 5th January please fill out the form [here](#).

We appreciate that these decisions come late in the day and may cause childcare and other concerns. We will do our best to communicate any further change as promptly as we can and I hope that you can appreciate that the school is having to react to a very fluid situation, with very little notice.

Online learning will take place for all pupils who are not in school and should your child have any difficulties accessing this please contact achievement@whickhamschool.org

Covid-19

We have had two positive cases of Covid-19 in school this week. Direct contacts of the pupils have been informed. The cases have been reported to the DfE and Gateshead Public Health who have confirmed that the Covid-19 procedures we are following are correct.

Please remember, if your child receives a positive Covid-19 test during the first six days of the Christmas holidays, please email covidtestresult@whickhamschool.org as soon as possible; we will need to take action and potentially ask some pupils to isolate if they have been in direct contact with a confirmed positive case. These arrangements have been stipulated by the DfE and Gateshead Council. Gateshead Council have sent a letter detailing information for parents and carers which can be found [here](#).

Please also ensure that you and your child(ren) remain conscious of the tier 3 restrictions which remain in place for the region. Restriction guidance can be found here <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/tier-3-very-high-alert>

Thank you for your patience and understanding as we work through the testing guidance and plan the logistics of such a large scale undertaking.

Yours sincerely



Fraser Turnbull
Headteacher