

Thursday 31 December 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

You will be aware that yesterday the Department for Education announced changes to the start of term arrangements in January.

Start of term arrangements

As communicated at the end of last term, Monday 4th January has been designated as an INSET day so that the school can put in place arrangements for remote learning and the testing programme that will commence over the next few weeks. **All students will receive remote learning (in line with normal timetables) from Tuesday 5th January. This will start with a remote tutorial session at 8.45am on Tuesday where tutors will check students can access the online learning systems and are ready for learning. A link will be emailed to students on Monday 4th.** Remote learning guidance was provided at the end of last term and can be accessed through this [link](#). We expect all students to engage in remote learning and this is both supported and monitored by staff. Any student who is identified as not engaging in remote learning will be asked to come into school and work within one of our support bubbles.

Year 11 and 13 students will return to school on Monday 11th January (other year groups will continue with remote learning) and the current plan is for all students to return to school on Monday 18th January. We will be writing to you next week to keep you updated with our plans for the week commencing 11th January.

Students sitting external examinations and internal mock examinations in January and February

The changes to the start of term will understandably cause anxiety to many students, particularly those sitting examinations. I want to reassure you that all internal and external examinations that are scheduled will take place as normal and students will be fully supported in their preparation. Our after school revision programme for Year 11 students will start on Monday 11th January and allows all students the opportunity to access a revision session each evening (3.20pm-4.20pm). Year 12 and 13 students will continue to access an additional one hour in each subject as part of their normal timetable when they return.

The Year 11 Parent and Carer Consultation Evening on Tuesday 12th January will take place as normal. This will be held virtually and a separate communication regarding this evening will be sent out next week and I ask that all parents and carers attend these appointments.

Vulnerable students and the children of key workers

Students who are identified as vulnerable and those children whose parents and carers are key workers from any year group can attend school from Tuesday 5th January. If your child is in one of these categories and will be attending school please complete the form using this [link](#).

Mass testing of students and staff

Work has been ongoing over the holiday to prepare us for the requirement to test students and staff. We are extremely grateful for the many offers of support that we have received from members of the local community. Over 50 people have volunteered to support us with this programme and we plan to start testing next week. Testing for students and staff is voluntary but we believe it is vital to

help both the school and local community to stay safe. We will therefore encourage all students and staff to be tested.

Testing for students under the age of 16 requires consent and it is important all parents and carers complete the document that can be accessed through this [link](#). The same form can also be used by staff and students over the age of 16. The DfE have released a [leaflet](#) that explains what the test involves.

Tier 4 Restrictions

You will be aware that the North East has moved into Tier 4 restrictions. The specific requirements for us all are detailed in the advice that is linked [here](#). All children, unless they are traveling to and from school or engaging in one of the activities detailed in the guidance, must stay at home. I appreciate this can be difficult for young people but it is vital we all do our bit to ensure our community is safe.

Thank you for your continued support during these challenging times.

Yours faithfully

Fraser Turnbull
Headteacher