

Good Morning

I'd like to start by wishing you and your family a Happy New Year. I hope you've managed to enjoy the break and continued to stay safe and well through the school holiday. I hadn't imagined when we broke up that I would need to be in contact during this weekend, but national developments have taken over.

Following the government announcements last week and a lot of press coverage during this weekend about the start of term I'm emailing to update you with current arrangements for the start of term. I apologise that this is coming to you at short notice, but this has though been a rapidly changing situation with details and clarification from the Department for Education only arriving this weekend. I should also note that politically things continue to change rapidly and so there will continue to be the possibility of further impact on schools. We will also get in touch with all families directly during the course of tomorrow, Monday 4th January, to discuss the specific impact on your child.

As it currently stands and the headlines you will have seen refer to, for mainstream schools, the government have announced a delay to in person teaching - until the 11th January for Year 11 and the 18th January for all other year groups - while those not in school will have access to remote learning.

It seems there are two factors behind these delays - the sharp increase in COVID cases nationally and the introduction, in schools, of a regular mass testing programme aimed at identifying cases of COVID which are asymptomatic.

The headline announcements don't apply to PRUs in the same way as mainstream schools, there is however still an expectation that we set up an in school testing programme. Whilst that programme of testing could have potential benefits, initially setting this up at the same time as fully opening would provide a significant logistical challenge. To support this therefore we have been given the freedom to open this week only to those students for whom on site provision is absolutely necessary, with all other students expected to access remote learning from home.

We will be in touch during Monday to discuss whether your child should be in school from Tuesday 5th January or learning from home. For those students not in school, the absolute expectation will be that they do engage in the learning that is set.

The current indication from Government is that we will be fully open to all students again from Monday 11th January. As I started this message however I'll again highlight that there is a lot of change currently which is outside of our control and decisions will be taken in light of national and local public health advice.

Andrew Stewart
Head Teacher

