

Dear Parent/Carer

As always, I hope you continue to stay safe and well. As we continue to navigate the challenging period we are in as a country the announcement from the Prime Minister means that plans in school have to change again. As the phased reopening plan for this term meant we already had reduced numbers on site we will be implementing these changes **from Monday 11th January**.

As you'll be aware, schools across the country have been asked to move to learning from home for the majority of students in order to reduce the spread of COVID-19. The exceptions to this are children of critical workers who are unable to be cared for at home and those who meet a government definition of being vulnerable. If your employment is within a critical role (e.g. healthcare) **and** there are no other means for your child to be kept safely at home, please contact us on [enquiries@thebridge.cheshire.sch.uk](mailto:enquiries@thebridge.cheshire.sch.uk) by the end of Thursday 7th January to request a place to continue at school. In order to help us to keep everyone safe please do only request this where it is essential and not just as a result of preference for where your child learns. We may need to request proof of employment status to ensure fairness of access for all families.

We will be directly in contact with families who meet the government definition of vulnerable throughout this afternoon and tomorrow to discuss the most suitable provision for your child during this period.

**If you haven't had direct contact to confirm a place in school by the end of this week your child must continue to work from home and follow national lock-down guidance in order to help keep everyone safe.**

Whether working at home or in school, all students will continue to follow their normal curriculum and timetable which will be available to them via Google Classrooms. Further detail and guidance on accessing this will be sent to you separately, but this will include live teaching via computer from school staff and follow up learning activities. We're well aware that there may be a strain on some households with different children and adults needing to work from home at the same time. When this is the case, the same work and learning will remain available to students to complete at different times on that day. If you have difficulties in accessing any of the learning, or have issues with IT access please contact us in the school office so we can direct you to the right person to help. Through this system we will be able to maintain regular contact and those crucial relationships between staff and students that will hopefully help to make things easier on their return to school.

We don't yet know for certain how long these arrangements are going to have to be in place, but we are expecting this to be the case until at least February half term. We will miss having the school full of young people but will continue to be here to support you and your family. We'll be in touch regularly, but we're also aware that the sacrifices the government are asking you to make may make things more difficult at times for some families - please do remember that we are here to support you and get in touch if there is anything we can do to help.

For all students this is now the second period of significant disruption to education and it is vitally important that they continue to engage in learning through this lockdown in order to support their positive futures. For Year 11 students in particular I know this will be an unsettling time as we know GCSE exams in their normal format won't happen, but don't yet know how they will be replaced. These are different circumstances to last year however when this decision was taken later and schools were asked to make a grading decision based on the knowledge of work students had already completed. As we are only at the start of January it is expected that there will be some other form of assessment to replace exams and provide GCSE grades this summer. The work that students continue to do now is more important than ever - it may not be possible to 'pull something out the bag' with mass revision in the days before an exam, every piece of work and learning may well count towards final results.

A number of students had only just started with us, or indeed were due to do so properly in the coming days. I'm sure this will make things even stranger for you, but the same learning opportunities will still be available to these students and we'll look forward to properly getting to know you better once the government feel infection rates are at a safe enough level for schools to physically reopen.

If your child normally receives Free School Meals, we'll continue to make provision for this even if learning at home and we will be in touch with these families separately to confirm arrangements.

I'm sorry that we're again giving you short notice of these changes, but once again we only found out what was to be expected of schools at the same time as you did, watching TV on Monday night. Our school however is a community and more than just the building. The building may be closed to the majority of students, but that community remains and our staff will continue to work hard for your children. I appreciate your support in making sure that all students continue to make the most of the opportunities they have to learn in the coming weeks and hope that with the national roll out of vaccines we get back to some sort of normality soon.

Best Wishes

**Andrew Stewart**  
Head Teacher

