

Our Ref: SLT/FSC-0401WSL

Monday 4th January 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

Things are moving really quickly at the moment, so although I only wrote to you on Thursday, I need to update you on arrangements for the next week or two. We have heard rumours that the Prime Minister will be announcing further restrictions today, but we will assume schools are unaffected - if anything here becomes out of date we will write to you again tomorrow!

Today, we have had 75 students and all of our staff in school. These students are those of critical workers together with our Headway cohort and vulnerable students. They have all had the option of a hot lunchtime meal and all school transport has ran as usual. Exams are all running as expected this week and next, with the exception of Hair and Beauty that has been moved to a March sitting. Online revision days are in place for this week and in-school revision days planned for next week.

From next Monday, **11th January**, all Year 10 and Year 11 students will be back in school. Many of these have a Sport exam on Monday and most Year 10 students, as well as Year 11s, have summer exams, so we include both year groups in our definition of exam classes and will expect them back in school next week. Years 7, 8 and 9 students will not be back in school until **Monday 18th January**.

There has been lots of speculation in the media about whether secondary schools should close fully and for longer but we want to emphasise that we believe the best place for students to be is in school. We are all concerned about the new Covid-19 variant but we also know that we have excellent infection control systems. We know that in the autumn term not one member of staff or student who was identified as a close contact of someone in school who tested positive, went on to contract Covid-19. This is down to wearing masks, washing hands regularly, social distancing and wiping down tables and chairs and other surfaces at the end of each lesson and around the school. It is important we keep up these measures now and when all students are back in school.

This week was supposed to be the start of our Year 8 options process, with an Options Fair planned for Wednesday followed by information sent out to parents and students next Monday. This process will now be delayed by two weeks and the Options Fair will now be held on Wednesday 20th January. We still hope to stick to our deadline for return of option forms of Tuesday 9th February.

Today, we are grappling with the complicated nature of setting up Covid-19 testing for all staff and students. Government guidelines suggest that we need 13 staff to run this process. If we employ 13 staff full time from now until we break up in the summer, it will cost the school over £150,000, yet the government is only providing us with £15,000 - 10% of the total staffing cost. I can't afford to take £135,000 from our funding for textbooks, revision resources, student rewards and teachers, so there is no way we can run the testing system as the government wants us to do.

This leaves us scratching our heads as to how we can get the testing systems up and running this week, as the government requires that we do. We certainly don't have a spare 13 members of staff and the recruitment process alone could take a month. Therefore, in this letter I am not

going to outline the processes for mass testing at Baysgarth. This will come later this week or even next week. I will just confirm that it is still our intention to test staff and students when we are in a position to do so, and that the first stage of this will be asking you for consent so that your child can take the test. This will come via a separate letter with an online consent form to complete for each child that attends Baysgarth. When a student or member of staff tests positive, those close contacts will be informed, as we have done in the autumn term. Those who have given consent will still come to school every day, and will have a daily test for seven days to check they haven't contracted Covid-19. Those that haven't given consent will have to stay at home and self-isolate for 10 days. Therefore, it's really important that you give your consent to avoid these lengthy periods of self-isolation.

The key question that you will need an answer from us today about is remote learning. With some of our students not back in school for two weeks, we need to be clear with you about our expectations and protocols for remote learning over the next fortnight.

The government has asked that Year 11 is prioritised for online learning this week, but as a school we feel we need to commit to maintaining education for every year group and as such we have a plan that will ensure every student will have access to learning from tomorrow. The details of our approach are as follows:

Year 11

At 8.30am tomorrow, we will have a virtual Year 11 assembly led by Mr North. Details on how to join this will be emailed directly to students. We ask students to mute themselves and turn cameras off for this session.

Year 11 students will be following their usual timetables with each lesson being facilitated by their regular classroom teacher, with the exception of core PE. Each session will be started with a live introduction by the classroom teacher, where they will explain the new content and what students need to do in the session. The link for this session will appear in the stream of the Google Classroom for the subject. The introduction will be a maximum of 15 minutes and then students will complete the work through Google Classroom. The classroom teacher will remain online so they can offer support to students promptly for the rest of the session.

All work will be set as an assignment, so if your child does not complete it or misses the session, you will be alerted through your Google Classroom alerts. This will allow you as parents to support your child and ensure that they take full advantage of sessions this week. If you have not signed up to receive these alerts, please contact us and we will arrange this for you.

In order to make sure that these lessons are conducted in a safe, supportive way, there are strict guidelines which all students should adhere to. These are attached to this letter and we would appreciate your support in reiterating the importance of ensuring your child follows these at all times.

If any student or parent feels their child cannot take part in this approach, please contact your child's teachers directly, who will be more than happy to ensure that your child does not miss out and is fully supported.

Year 10 and 9

From tomorrow, work will be provided for students in Year 10 and 9 in English, Maths, Science and their option subjects. This work will be set in the Google Classroom, which your child should have access to already. Work will be set for the week and work will need to be submitted by Friday. As a parent you will be informed of the deadlines and activity through the weekly summary from your child's classrooms. Again, if you have any issues or questions, please get in touch as soon as possible.

Year 7 and 8

From tomorrow, work will be provided for students in Year 7 and 8 in English, Maths, Science, MFL, History, Geography, RE and their Flipped Learning. This work will be set in the Google Classroom, which your child should have access to already. Work will be set for the week and work will need to be submitted by Friday. As a parent you will be informed of the deadlines and activity through the weekly summary from your child's classrooms. Please contact us with any issues.

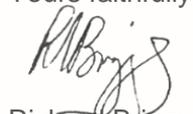
If there are any worries or concerns about remote learning, please contact staff directly who will be happy to help. In the event that you need to borrow ICT equipment, please contact the Main Reception, who will be able to arrange for the loan of a laptop device, to allow your child to access their learning.

Additionally, due to the staggered reopening, we will be offering families eligible for Free School Meals the opportunity to collect a weekly food parcel until your child(ren) return(s) to school. Parents entitled to this support will be offered one food parcel per child per week, which will be available to collect from the Main Reception during school hours. Alternative pick up points may be available and we ask that parents indicate their preference, which we will facilitate where possible. If you would like to request food parcels, please complete a brief [online form](#) here as soon as possible.

I'm sure this won't be the last letter I write to you this week! Just a reminder we have an advert out for a [Learning Support Assistant](#) at the moment - the closing date is 12pm on Friday. Please share with anyone who might be interested in a new and rewarding challenge!

Take care, stay safe and get in touch if you have any questions or queries that are not answered by our letters.

Yours faithfully



Richard Briggs
Head Teacher