

Our Ref: RBR/FSc-1712WSL

Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> December 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

I wasn't planning on writing to you again this term but as you will have seen from the news, the Department for Education has made an announcement this afternoon that all secondary schools will have a staggered start to the term after Christmas. This announcement has certainly come as a surprise to us and with the school now having closed for Christmas, provides us with many challenges as to how to prepare for the start of the new term.

[The Secretary of State's announcement can be read here.](#)

The key section of this press release is as follows:

*'Students in exam year groups, vulnerable children and children of critical workers will all attend school or college in person from the start of term, as will all students in primary, special and alternative provision schools and colleges.*

*Vocational exams scheduled for the week of 4 January will go ahead as planned.*

*Secondary schools and colleges will operate a staggered return, offering all non-exam year groups full-time remote education, as close as possible to that which students would get in class, during the first week of term, with face-to-face education for all starting on 11 January.'*

There is no further guidance as to what constitutes 'exam year groups' or 'critical workers' so schools are left to their own discretion to determine these lists. This letter will, in good faith, set out what we think and expect to happen when we return in January. If further guidance comes out and we have to change these expectations, I will write to you again with clarification.

**For the first week of the Spring Term, Year 7, 8 and 9 students will not be in school but will work from home and will learn via remote learning.** Thankfully, all of our systems are already set up for this through Google Classroom. We will not be hosting live lessons but will set work as we have done during previous lockdowns. These students will return on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> January.

**Year 10 and 11 students will be in school as normal from Monday 4<sup>th</sup> January.** Both Year 10 and 11 are 'exam year groups' in our view as these students are sitting exams in January. As you can see from the table below, we have a number of exams in January so need all of our Year 10 and Year 11 students in school as normal.

DATE	TIME	LENGTH	EXAM
THURSDAY 7 <sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2021	8:45 AM	1:00 1:15 E/T	21512E BTEC MUSIC "THE MUSIC INDUSTRY" YEAR 11
FRIDAY 8 <sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2021	12:30 PM	1:30 1:53 E/T	UV21578 ONLINE HAIR & BEAUTY EXAM YEAR 11
MONDAY 11 <sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2021	8:45 AM	1:00 1:15 E/T	R041/01 OCR RISK OF SPORT INJURY YEAR 10 & YEAR 11
THURSDAY 14 <sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2021	8:45 AM	1:30 1:53E/T	5569UB01 WJEC HOSPITALITY & CATERING YEAR 11

**Vulnerable students in all year groups will be in school from Monday 4<sup>th</sup> January.** These include all of our Discover students and all of our Headway students. The school keeps a record of all of our vulnerable students and these will be contacted by us directly so everyone in this category will know that they are expected to be in school.

**Critical worker children from all year groups will also be expected to be in school from Monday 4<sup>th</sup> January.** There is no new definition of what constitutes a critical worker so we will use the same definition of critical worker as we used for the initial lockdown - these are children where both parents (or the parent in a single parent household) are working in a critical industry or public service. We have a list of these students from the initial lockdown but things are changing rapidly so if circumstances have changed and you think you might be a critical worker household then please complete the form [here](#) by Monday 21<sup>st</sup> December at 12.00pm so that we have an up-to-date list and can plan to accommodate your child from Monday 4<sup>th</sup> January.

The second piece of the article from the Secretary of State relates to rapid testing in schools. No information has been presented to us on this, and no other guidance is available, so we are completely in the dark as to what this might look like in school. The letter is clear that schools will need consent before administering a test, but as to who administers it, when, where and how, we just don't know. If more information comes to light, I will write to you further, but my expectation is that this might take some time to get organised in January and parents should not expect systems to be in place from the start of term.

Once again, I apologise for the short notice and for sending information out after the end of term but I'm sure you can appreciate that we are having to respond to breaking news and provide you with as much information as possible as quickly as we can.

Take care and have a lovely Christmas break!

Yours faithfully



Richard Briggs  
Headteacher