

Friday 29 January 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope you and your family are well, and keeping safe. I am writing simply to keep in touch and to ensure that you are fully informed with the latest, confirmed information about current circumstances.

School Reopening

The Prime Minister confirmed to the [House of Commons on 27 January](#), and again in his [Press Conference](#) on the same day, that schools will not re-open 'immediately after half-term on 22nd February'. He stated that 'March 8 is the earliest date by which we might responsibly be able to [commence the reopening of schools], given what we know.' The Department for Education (DfE) and Secretary of State for Education [confirmed](#) that 'Education attendance restrictions are to be reviewed again in mid-February and the government has committed to publishing a plan for leaving lockdown by the end of February,' which 'will look at when more pupils and students can be brought back into schools.' We will, of course keep you fully informed as and when we receive further information.

February half-term

The DfE confirmed in communication to schools on 26 January that 'Schools will close as usual over February half-term and are not expected to remain open to vulnerable children and the children of critical workers during that week.' We are required to continue to provide contact tracing over the half term week, and will reiterate procedures (similar to those set out for the Christmas period) to families in due course.

Summer 2021 Exams

We have submitted our response to the consultation on [how GCSE, AS and A level grades should be awarded in summer 2021](#), and to the consultation on [alternative arrangements for the award of VTQs and other general qualifications in 2021](#). If your child is in Y11 or Y13, and if you or they have not yet responded to the consultations but wish to, you can do so via [this link](#) for the GCSE, AS and A Level consultation, and [this link](#) for the consultation on alternative arrangements for the award of VTQs and other general qualifications. Both consultations close this evening at 11:45pm. For your convenience, I summarised the key proposals from both consultations — as they affect our students — in my letter of [21 January](#). We do not know the time it will take for the DfE and Ofqual to arrive at their decisions but can assure you that we will finalise and share our 'Exceptional Arrangements' policy for 'Summer 2021 Awards of GCSE, AS, A level, and Vocational and Technical Qualifications' as quickly as possible once dates and decisions are confirmed.

Rapid Results Testing Programme

I summarise below, for clarity, some important and significant changes to the mass testing programme in schools that we have been informed about recently. These changes will apply to any staff working on site, any student attending our provision for vulnerable children and children of critical workers, and all students upon return when schools reopen fully.

- Until further notice, schools will not be carrying out any daily testing of contacts of positive cases and will instead continue to identify contacts and advise self-isolation.
- Until further notice, there is no need for a confirmatory PCR (polymerase chain reaction) test following a positive result with an LFD (lateral flow device) test in secondary schools and colleges. Following a positive LFD test result, an individual will need to self-isolate in line with government guidance, and we will identify contacts and advise self-isolation.
- If an individual has recently (within 90 days) tested positive for COVID-19, they are likely to have developed some immunity. However, given the current prevalence of the virus and the pressing need to reduce transmission, individuals can take an LFD test regardless of whether they have tested positive previously as this is a good indicator of high viral load, and therefore infectiousness.

'Keeping in Touch' Survey

Thank you very much to the 300 parents and carers that have been able to complete the latest [Keeping in Touch: Parents and carers \(January 2021\)](#) questionnaire we distributed earlier this week, and to the nearly 600 students who have been able to complete the [Keeping in Touch: Students \(January 2021\)](#) questionnaire. The questionnaires focus on the remote learning your child has been engaging with throughout the period of this National Lockdown, and we have already started to act on the feedback we have received thus far, both in terms of our practice and in terms of providing more practical support where we can to families who need it. If you have not yet been able to complete the questionnaire, please remember that both surveys close at 11:45pm on Sunday 31 January. We are genuinely very grateful for the feedback we receive through these surveys, whether to reinforce aspects of our provision that are working well, or to point out aspects of our provision that we could think about again or do better.

Thank you very much once again for your ongoing support. Please do not hesitate to contact us should you require any further information.

As ever, keep safe, and keep looking after yourself and each other.

Yours sincerely,



Derrick Brett (Principal).



Important

Advice for schools

CORONAVIRUS SYMPTOMS IN CHILDREN

A CHILD WHO DEVELOPS ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING SYMPTOMS SHOULD BE CONSIDERED AS A POTENTIAL CORONAVIRUS CASE:



NEW CONTINUOUS COUGH

This means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or three or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if the child usually has a cough, it may be worse than usual)



FEVER (TEMPERATURE OF 37.8°C OR HIGHER)

The child will also feel hot to touch on their chest or back



A LOSS OR CHANGE TO SENSE OF SMELL OR TASTE

this means the child has noticed they cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal.

MOST CHILDREN WITH CORONAVIRUS HAVE AT LEAST ONE OF THESE SYMPTOMS.



If a child is unwell with one or more of these specific symptoms they should be told not to come into school or sent home as soon as possible and advised to get a coronavirus test. **ONLY** those children with one or more of these symptoms or those advised by their clinician or Local Authority should get a test.



Children reporting other symptoms such as a headache, sore throat, runny or sniffly nose, earache, itchy eyes, lethargy or tiredness **WITHOUT** a fever should **NOT** be treated as potential coronavirus cases or advised to take a test.

If the national guidance on symptoms of coronavirus in children changes, updated information will be provided at a local level as soon as possible. This information about coronavirus symptoms in children can be shared with all school teaching and administration staff as well as parents and carers where necessary.

For further guidance on coronavirus testing for schools, please read the letter from PHE and NHS Test and Trace to school and college leaders at: bit.ly/phe-schools

ENGLAND LOCKDOWN

STAY AT HOME

**THE NEW VARIANT OF CORONAVIRUS IS SPREADING FAST.
WE ALL NEED TO PLAY OUR PART TO STOP THE SPREAD.**

▶ LEAVING HOME

You must not leave, or be outside of your home or garden, except for a very limited set of exemptions e.g. to shop for basic necessities, exercise, go to work if you cannot do so from home, or to escape risk of harm.

▶ MEETING OTHERS

You cannot leave your home to meet socially with anyone, except with your household or support bubble (if eligible to form one). Stay 2 metres apart from anyone not in your household or support bubble.

▶ EXERCISE

You may exercise on your own, with your household or support bubble, or with one person from another household (when on your own). Stay 2 metres apart from anyone not in your household or support bubble.

▶ BARS, PUBS AND RESTAURANTS

Hospitality closed aside from sales by takeaway (until 11pm), click-and-collect, drive-through or delivery. Alcohol cannot be purchased through takeaway or click-and-collect from hospitality venues.

▶ RETAIL

Essential shops can open. Non-essential retail must close and can only run click-and-collect and delivery.

▶ WORK AND BUSINESS

Everyone must work from home unless they are unable to do so.

▶ EDUCATION

Early years settings open. Primary and secondary schools and colleges move to remote provision except for vulnerable children and children of critical workers. Most university students to move to remote learning.

▶ LEISURE AND SPORTING FACILITIES

Closed, with limited exceptions.

▶ ACCOMMODATION

Closed, with limited exceptions.

▶ PERSONAL CARE

Closed.

▶ ENTERTAINMENT

Closed.

▶ OVERNIGHT STAYS

You must not stay overnight away from home. Limited exceptions apply e.g. to stay with your support bubble.

▶ WEDDINGS AND FUNERALS

Funerals of up to 30 people permitted. Weddings up to 6 people permitted in exceptional circumstances. Wakes and other linked ceremonial events of up to 6 permitted.

▶ PLACES OF WORSHIP

Places of worship can remain open and communal worship is permitted, but you must not mix with those outside your household or support bubble.

▶ TRAVELLING

You must stay at home. If you do leave home for a very limited set of exemptions, you should stay local in the village, town, or part of the city where you live where possible. Do not travel abroad unless an exemption applies.

▶ CLINICALLY EXTREMELY VULNERABLE

Shielding reintroduced across England. You should not travel to work, school, college or university and should limit the time you spend outside the home. You should only go out for medical appointments, exercise or if it is essential.

▶ CARE HOME VISITS

Visits can take place with arrangements such as substantial screens, visiting pods, or behind windows. Close-contact indoor visits are not allowed. No visits will be permitted in the event of an outbreak but end of life visits are permitted in all circumstances.