



31 December 2020

Return of students for the start of the Spring Term

Dear Parent/Carer,

I hope you have had a lovely Christmas and have managed to see family where it has been safe to do so.

You will probably have seen or read the announcement from the government yesterday regarding secondary schools and colleges being asked to implement a phased start to the spring term, and being invited to set up a mass COVID-19 testing programme for students and staff. The announcement can be found here

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/education-secretary-sets-out-school-contingency-plans-for-england>

We will follow the government guidance on how to phase the start of term, which is intended to ensure effective education can continue but also reduce the spread of the virus as students and staff return after Christmas. This means we will be operating a phased start to the spring term:

Week commencing Monday 4 January 2021

On Monday 4 January the school will not be open to students as we have a planned CPD day.

On Tuesday 5 January, the following students will return to school:

- Year 6 students
- Vulnerable students and the children of critical workers

We will be contacting the parents/carers of students that we have identified as vulnerable students over the next few days to confirm their attendance at school from the Tuesday 5 January. Should you need to discuss your son/daughter's place please contact the school at office@tdms.worcs.sch.uk and we will arrange for a member of the student support team to contact you.

Parents/carers of children who are critical workers (please see the definition of a critical worker below) should complete the form by following the link to inform the school that you will be sending your son/daughter in by the end of Friday 1 January. If you have problems accessing the form you should contact the school at office@tdms.worcs.sch.uk.

Critical worker definition: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision>

Critical worker reply form: <https://forms.gle/iraH9KByFvBgkBdL6>

As the catering facilities at the school will be limited, vulnerable students and the children of critical workers who attend school from Tuesday 5 January will need to bring a packed lunch. Children who receive free school meals should also bring a packed lunch to school but please refer to the section on 'Free School Meal Vouchers' later in this letter for further information. Meals from the school catering facility will be available for students in Year 6.

At the time of writing we are still confirming if the school transport will be running from Tuesday 5 January we will inform parents as soon as we have a definite list of the services that are running. Please use the current entrance arrangements to the school.

Week commencing Monday 11 January 2021

Students in year groups Years 11 and 13 will return to school. Further information will be sent to parents/carers next week about their return and the offer of COVID-19 testing in school and the necessary documentation associated with this.

Week commencing Monday 18 January 2021

Students in all year groups will return to school. Further information will be sent to parents/carers about the full return of all students and the offer of COVID-19 testing in school and the necessary documentation associated with this.

Remote Education

From Tuesday 5 January remote education will be made for all students via Google Classroom. Further information about our remote education offer can be found on our website via the link here

<https://www.tdms.worcs.sch.uk/remoteeducationoffer> from Monday 4 January. Students who are identified as a critical worker child or a vulnerable student will follow the same remote education whilst in school.

BTEC external examinations

These examinations will be running as normal on Friday 8, Monday 11 and Friday 15 January. Students not in school will only be expected to come into school for the date and time of their examination. We will be contacting students early next week with specific arrangements and information.

Mass testing programme

We are positive about the potential for the mass testing of students and staff in schools, as a way of reducing the spread of the virus and enabling fewer students and staff to have to self-isolate. Setting up this programme in school is an incredibly complex operation. We have been sent some information about how it should work already, but more detailed guidance is expected to be produced by the government over the next few days. We will not, therefore, be in position to have this programme up and running from Tuesday 5 January but aim to have this in place for the week commencing Monday 11 January. We will let you know more about our plans as soon as we can on our return next week. In the meantime, from the start of next term, we will continue to implement the safety measures we have been using in the autumn term. Please note that at the moment the programme only applies to secondary school students and therefore Year 6 will not be part of the initial testing.

Free School Meal Vouchers

It is our intention that from Tuesday 5 January families who are in receipt of free school meals will have vouchers issued for the duration of the time their son/daughter is out of school. The vouchers will end when students return to school, where the catering services in school will resume.

Year 13 mock examinations

It is unfortunate that we have had to postpone the Year 13 mock examinations that were due to start on Tuesday 5 January. We are currently planning the timetable for the rearrangement of the examinations when the Year 13 students return to school on Monday 11 January and we will provide more specific details over the coming days.

Please accept our apologies for having to send this letter during the Christmas break but I am sure you will appreciate that the information needed to be shared with you as expediently as possible. Thank you for your patience and support following these recent changes to the start of the new term.

May I take this opportunity to wish you a Happy New Year.

Yours sincerely,

Stuart Weston

Associate Headteacher