



18th December 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

As you are aware following recent press articles and the letter from our CEO yesterday afternoon, the government has announced significant changes to the start of term for secondary schools in the last 24 hours. Having threatened some schools with legal action for wishing to utilise remote learning in the last week of the Autumn term, they have now instructed us to use remote learning for all but Y11 and Y13 for the first week back. I am disappointed to be informing parents with such short notice of the following changes, but have adapted to the news as quickly as I possibly could. The arrangements for the first week back will, therefore, be as follows:

When?	What?	Who?	Why?
Monday 4th January	An additional training day for staff - students will not attend school	All students	The government has given schools the opportunity to add this additional INSET day to help them prepare for mass testing
Tuesday 5th January - Friday 8th January	Face-to-face teaching for exam groups, vulnerable children and children of critical workers* - they will attend school as normal	Y11 Y13 Vulnerable children Children of critical workers	Exams are imminent, and following an already disruptive year, these groups are being prioritised for contact, alongside similar groups to during the first lockdown
Tuesday 5th January - Friday 8th January	Remote education for students who are not coming into school	Y7 Y8 Y9 Y10 Y12	In the guidance, it appears this is to allow for mass testing of the school cohort to take place prior to the 11th January
Monday 11th January	Return to school for all pupils	All students	To minimise disruption to education for any longer than necessary

** Further information is at the end of this letter regarding categories of vulnerable children/children of key workers and how to let us know if your son/daughter will be coming in.*

The government has also announced that schools will need to offer two lateral flow coronavirus tests to all students during the first week, prior to their return on the 11th January (although this is not a condition of their return). In addition, schools should be ready to administer daily testing to students where a positive coronavirus case is identified and weekly testing to staff on an ongoing basis. This involves amongst other things, according to a handbook circulated to schools:





- the set up of a 'testing site' on school premises;
- approximately 7 additional roles (some in multiples) to administer, process and coordinate testing;
- training for all staff involved;
- a communications strategy including obtaining consent from parents/carers.

All of this (in the planning at least) by what is, effectively, our next working day in school.

As I am sure you can imagine, this is a huge undertaking for us, and all secondary schools in the country: we require time to recruit additional staff, find solutions to creating additional space and deliver appropriate training. Therefore, the focus of this letter is on what you need to know to prepare for the first week back, as shown in the table above. I would be grateful if you could afford us some grace in communicating information about testing as this is well and truly beyond our usual remit as a school. Rest assured, as soon as we can, we will correspond further with you. We also anticipate further changes or updates to guidance from the government, as this has tended to happen throughout the pandemic.

Parents/Carers of vulnerable children or those that are critical workers

Vulnerable children are classed as those who:

- are assessed as being in need under section 17 of the Children Act 1989, including children and young people who have a child in need plan, a child protection plan or who are a looked-after child;
- have an education, health and care (EHC) plan;
- have been identified as otherwise vulnerable by educational providers or local authorities (including children's social care services), and who could therefore benefit from continued full-time attendance, this might include -
 - children and young people on the edge of receiving support from children's social care services or in the process of being referred to children's services;
 - adopted children or children on a special guardianship order;
 - those at risk of becoming NEET ('not in employment, education or training');
 - those living in temporary accommodation;
 - those who are young carers;
 - those who may have difficulty engaging with remote education at home (for example, due to a lack of devices or quiet space to study);
 - care leavers;
 - other children and young people at the provider and local authority's discretion including pupils who need to attend to receive support or manage risks to their mental health.

Critical workers are classed as those who work in:

- health and social care;
- education and childcare;
- key public services;





- local and national government;
- food and other necessary goods;
- public safety and national security;
- transport;
- utilities, communication and financial services.

Further information can be found on the government website www.gov.uk.

If you or your son/daughter falls into one of these categories, please complete our google form (attached with this letter) as soon as possible to let us know they will be coming into school during the first week (Tuesday-Friday). It is not mandatory for them to attend, but we need to know for planning purposes. Similarly, if you tell us they are coming and this changes, please also let us know via admin@stokesleyschool.org.

Finally, if any parents have concerns about technology and supporting remote learning at home, do not hesitate to get in touch. We will monitor office@stokesleyschool.org periodically throughout the holidays, and will - of course - be on-hand to make sure everything is established successfully on the 4th January during the newly denoted training day.

Once again, thank you for your continued forbearance with the ever-changing landscape within education.

Yours faithfully,

Mrs H. L. Millett
Headteacher

