



5th January 2021

Dear Parents/Carers,

When I wrote to you on New Year's Eve with the second update of the holidays regarding back to school plans, I did not think I would be writing again so soon to change those plans. However, there has been a sense of inevitability over the last 48 hours or so that we would need tougher measures across the country to curb dramatically rising infection rates.

It is now the case that, alongside the national lockdown, there are two major developments for schools:

1. remote education for all but the children of key workers and vulnerable children will be extended - it is likely that this will be until February half term; and,
2. exams will not proceed as planned in 2021.

In terms of the first item, the communication I sent to you last week is still relevant; measures will just be in place for longer.

### **Remote Learning**

Students learning from home should continue to follow their usual timetable via live google meets to maintain their progress. Occasionally, we will still have staff absence: either for covid or other reasons. If this is the case, a notification will be sent to students that there is no live lesson and work will be set in the Google classroom or via email by the Head of Subject/Faculty.

### **Critical Worker/Vulnerable Children Provision in School**

For students attending school, we are supporting the directive from the government and unions to allow staff to teach from home as much as possible. Therefore, children of key workers and vulnerable children attending school will be placed in small groups that are supervised by a member of our fantastic support staff. As an additional measure, students and supervising staff will wear face coverings in these rooms; students will be given 'mask breaks' when outside at three points during the day and whilst eating in the canteen. The rooms we are providing are also large enough to allow good ventilation and social distancing over and above minimum requirements.

During the supervised sessions in school, students will access the 'live' lessons from their teacher on a personal device along with their peers at home. Students will benefit from the additional support of the staff member in charge, and of the senior team who will be present in school. Please can I remind you that, because the groups of students may be accessing different lessons with different teachers, they must bring a set of headphones/earphones to school each day as well as a fully charged Chromebook if they have one.





## Exams in 2021

At present, we do not have information on how this process will work exactly and are awaiting the clear guidance we need from the examination boards to finalise our action plan. What we know so far is what the Prime Minister said last night: summer exams will not proceed as planned. Our advice to students in Year 11 and Year 13, for now, is to ensure they continue to work with the same diligence shown whilst present in school. As we did last year, we will undoubtedly need to use data already collated and that which we will collect throughout the rest of the academic year to assist in the allocation of grades. Please encourage your sons and daughters to fully engage with our online learning provision and Mrs Darbyshire will update you in full as soon as we have received the information we need from OFQUAL and the Department for Education.

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Some areas of the media would have the public believe that teachers do not want students in school, or to teach. This is not, and has never been, the case. Staff find teaching remotely a far greater challenge than teaching in person and long for nothing more than a return to normality for everyone. We do not want to close schools, and indeed our school is not really closed, but we do want to support a stamping out of this virus, an effective rolling out of a vaccine, and keep everyone - including your children, extended family, and ourselves - safe.

As I have noted on several occasions, I have been overwhelmed throughout this pandemic with the messages of support we have received from you on our daily basis; let's hope that this is truly the final push we will make together. Once complete, we can start to rebuild with the added strength in our community, between the school and parents particularly, that has been one happy outcome of these trying times.

As ever, do not hesitate to get in touch if you have any questions or need any support to get the most out of our remote learning offer. You are also able to add/remove your children from our key worker/vulnerable student rota at any time via admin.

For general enquiries: [office@stokesleyschool.org](mailto:office@stokesleyschool.org)

For IT/technical issues: [itsupport@stokesleyschool.org](mailto:itsupport@stokesleyschool.org)

For key worker/vulnerable child provision: [admin@stokesleyschool.org](mailto:admin@stokesleyschool.org)

Yours faithfully,

Mrs H. L. Millett  
Headteacher

