

31st December 2020

Dear parents/carers,

Re: Update on school reopening January 2021

Further to my letter of 18th December 2020, the Secretary of State for Education announced yesterday that secondary schools must now delay full opening in January 2021 by an additional week. A staggered return, to start with Year 11, is still planned for later in the month. Therefore, please can I ask that you take careful note of the following arrangements for the new term:

- **Monday 4th January 2021 – school is closed to all students.** This is an additional INSET Day in line with DfE guidance
- **Tuesday 5th January 2021 onwards – school is only open for face-to-face provision for some students.** Vulnerable children and the children of critical workers whose parents register in advance with us can return from 5th January. Those included in this category are determined by using DfE criteria and I have set this out below along with details of how to register your child for this provision. **All other students** will be expected to work at home and access remote education until their return date. Students will follow their normal timetable
- Year 11 will begin to return during w/c 11th January, in line with testing arrangements. Further details of the exact arrangements for this will follow during the first week of January and as we know more

The following table summarizes the plans for a phased return:

Year Group	Tuesday 5 th to Friday 8 th January 2021	w/c Monday 11 th January 2021	w/c Monday 18 th January 2021
Year 11	Remote education at home – follow normal timetable	Begin return to school in line with testing arrangements	Continue at school
Years 7 to 10	Remote education at home – follow normal timetable	Remote education at home – follow normal timetable	Return to school
Vulnerable children and the children of critical workers	Registered students return to school (see below for details)	Registered students continue at school	Registered students continue at school

Expectations for students when accessing remote education:

As stated above, students will follow their normal timetable of lessons when working at home. Our expectation is that all students learning remotely will:

- register, via TEAMS, with their tutor at 8:45 in the morning; tutors will send a meeting request to allow them to do this – it is important that we maintain this line of communication
- where students cannot do this, please phone in to say they are ready to work. If we do not hear from you, we will be ringing you to check that your child has access to the work set
- students should then check Class Charts for the work for each timetabled lesson, in the order they would have been taught the lessons. For some of these lessons this might mean they are told it is a live lesson in TEAMS. Where this is available, a meeting link will be sent to your child (via email and TEAMS)

- where it is a live lesson, students should join the meeting with the camera and mic off. All lessons will be recorded (for safeguarding purposes) but the teacher may ask during the lesson for cameras to be turned on and mics to be turned on so we can check for understanding. If a student is not comfortable with this then we will, of course, be understanding
- we are expecting a good level of engagement with tasks and work can be submitted via TEAMS or Class Charts

Criteria for vulnerable children and the children of critical workers:

The DfE guidance states that students can be included in this category if they:

- 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

If you feel that your child fits one of these criteria and wish to send them into school from the 5th January, **please contact the school by 3pm on Monday 4th January** to register. Please either telephone or use the jogoffice@excalibur.org.uk email address. Unfortunately, **we will not be able to accommodate children who do not register or who do not meet the criteria.**

Free School Meals, transport and COVID routines from 5th to 15th January:

As you might imagine, the timing of this announcement means that we still need to organise one or two things. Therefore, on Monday 4th we will finalise arrangements for relevant families to access Free School Meals whilst learning remotely and will write to you the same day. We will also provide further information about food provision for children who are in school to those families. We are in contact with our transport providers and will further update affected families as soon as we are able to do so. COVID routines and arrangements for safe provision in school remain as they were previously.

Testing:

You will no doubt have heard continued discussion in the media about testing in schools. Whilst we have begun to make provisional plans, these will clearly take shape in earnest when we return, and we will write to you with further information as soon as possible.

My sincere apologies for any inconvenience this announcement may cause you. If you have any queries, then please do not hesitate to contact the school via jogoffice@excalibur.org.uk.

In the meantime, I wish you and your family a Happy New Year and a restful weekend!

Yours sincerely,



Mr R Hawthorne
Head of School