

Thursday 31 December 2020



## Update Letter

Dear Parents & Carers,

I hope this letter finds you all safe & well, and I hope that you have been able to enjoy the festive season with members of your household and support bubble.

I am writing to let you know that following the announcement from the Prime Minister yesterday school will be closed to all pupils on Monday 4 January 2021.

I appreciate this is very short notice, but unfortunately it is crucial so that we can plan & prepare for the roll out of our testing programme.

There has been a great deal of speculation in the media over the festive period regards, tiers, the new strain, increased transmission, and schools re-opening.

There has also been some very encouraging news regards the Oxford/Astra-Zeneca vaccine.

As you will have seen mainstream secondary schools are having a staggered return, this has not been offered to special schools, however the Government have recognised very little time has been given to special schools to prepare, and as a result have offered a "Logistics Day" so that all the necessary staff training and planning and preparing for the testing programme can take place.

We are committed to playing our part in maintaining the health and well-being of our school community and although the testing is not mandatory, we intend to do all we can to run an effective testing programme for all staff and secondary aged young people that wish to take part.

As we enter Tier 4 and whilst the new strain is in Lancashire although not currently in significant amounts to cause concern, we feel testing of staff and secondary aged young people is a positive step in combating the virus.

It is voluntary and as a result, consent must be given by parents & carers for the test to be carried out.

The tests are due to arrive in school at 8am on Monday, the plan is to test all Staff on the Monday, during the "Logistics Day" we will also use this day to plan and prepare to start the testing of secondary age pupils on the Tuesday, this test will also be repeated on the Friday as per the Government Guidance.

The tests are lateral flow tests, which produce a result in approximately 30 minutes. The test involves a swab of each side of the throat four times and one of the nose.

We expect that the test will be problematic for many of our young people and they will be reluctant to have it done, if that is the case, no young person will be made to have a test, and if they refuse, their wishes will be respected.

We will of course produce some support materials in the form of social stories etc, to encourage the young person to take part, but it will be their choice.

We are currently exploring the option of tests being sent home, so that parents & carers would be able to support the young person in the comfort of their own home and text / email any positive results through.

If your child tests positive they will need to self-isolate for 10 days as per the current guidance.



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If you do wish for your child to be included in the testing programme please complete the [CONSENT FORM](#) by Monday 4<sup>th</sup> Jan at 12 noon, so that we can make the necessary preparations.

If you struggle to complete the online form, please email your consent to your child's class teacher and they will complete the form on your behalf.

The current guidance that has been shared with schools, is here, [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/947799/schools\\_and\\_colleges\\_testing\\_handbook.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/947799/schools_and_colleges_testing_handbook.pdf). However, it is guidance for mainstream settings, we are expecting specific SEND guidance over the next few days.

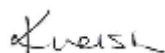
In these uncertain times, if you would prefer for your young person to remain at home until our testing programme is up and running, this is your personal choice and I will support your decision, please rest assured there will be no consequences or fines for keeping your young person at home for the next couple of weeks.

Thank you so much for your patience and understanding.

I will be in touch with further information early next week.

Kindest regards,

Keep Safe 



Mr Kieran Welsh  
Headteacher



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