

Dear Parent/Carer

It would be nice to be able to tell you what the plans for next year are as the students go home for their Christmas holiday. The DfE have announced that "information on next steps will follow in the coming days." I'm hopeful that this will be because they are working on fine details of a well-thought through plan that has been in development for some time rather than making policy on the hoof!

School closed to all except Year 11 for the first week back:

The government has asked for secondary schools to open only to Year 11 for the week we come back. Therefore, the current plans are:

- **Year 11** return on Thursday 7th January.
- **All other years** return on Monday 11th January.

We will also staff an area for children of keyworkers or students who are vulnerable at home. These students will conduct supervised remote learning. If you would like your child to be able access this provision, please email enquiries@balshaws.org.uk

What if my child gets Covid over the Christmas break?

Please remember, ***you must tell us*** if your child has Covid-19.

- If your child:
 - shows symptoms of Covid-19 within 48 hours of the end of the school term
 - or***
 - tests positive for Covid-19 having shown symptoms within 48 hours of the end of school
- You should report this to school immediately by emailing: enquiries@balshaws.org.uk

Mass Testing from January

The government has announced that secondary schools will conduct mass testing from January.

It is not yet entirely clear how this will happen, where it will happen or how it will be staffed. However, you can find out more about the government's intentions to mass test [here](#):

<https://dfemedia.blog.gov.uk/2020/12/15/mass-testing-in-schools-your-questions-answered/>

It may be that in the new year we will be asking if there are any parents or friends of Balshaw's who may have some medical experience or relevant skills who would be interested in volunteering to undertake training to be able to conduct the testing process. When we know more, we will let you know.

Christmas Information

- Many children may be receiving e-scooters for Christmas. Lancashire County Council have sent out information which I have attached to this communication to remind all families that e-scooters class as a motor vehicle and their use in public is illegal. Balshaw's has never allowed students to travel to school on scooters and this remains our policy.
- If you have not yet watched our celebration of Christmas (Follow the Star of Hope) I recommend it highly to you. Our School Chaplain, Luke Blakeley takes us through a selection of readings that explain exactly why the Christmas brings hope. There are musical items and a short performance. Please do make time to watch if you can here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ib64dcxHOcl&feature=youtu.be>

Thank you for your Support

On behalf of the staff I would like to thank you for the many positive messages of support and thanks that we have received from parents. These mean a lot and have kept us going this term as we have worked to keep your children safe and maintain education in as normal a fashion as we can.

I will communicate again if there are any updates to the information in this message. I hope not to have to contact any of you about the need to self-isolate in the next few days, but that, within the guidelines, you can share the joy of Christmas together.

Christmas blessings from all at Balshaw's.

HEADTEACHER
BALSHAW'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND HIGH SCHOOL

Your Word is a lamp for my feet and a light on my path. (Psalm 119, vs 105)