



## Kirkburton Middle School

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18<sup>th</sup> December 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

### RE: Arrangements for the start of the Spring Term

My sincere apologies for the very late notice of these arrangements but they are in response to a government directive only issued yesterday that applies to all schools in England. I am sure that like me, many of you will have found out about intentions of the Department for Education to roll out the use of lateral flow testing in secondary schools in the evening news. This is clearly a welcome announcement and will hopefully enable more children to maintain consistent in-school education without the disruption caused by an extended period of self-isolation following the positive test of a close contact.

Be reassured that although we haven't had sufficient time before the Christmas break to respond fully to the announcements, we will do everything we can to support our children and our families.

### Staggered returns:

You will no doubt also be aware that the Government has announced a staggered start to the return to school in January for secondary age pupils. They have asked schools and colleges to provide remote education to most pupils, only opening for face-to-face education for vulnerable children, children of critical workers and those in exam years. Monday 4<sup>th</sup> January is a staff training day – as previously planned. It is anticipated that on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> January, only the following pupils will return for on-site learning:

- all Year 6 pupils
- vulnerable pupils in Years 7 and 8 – we will make contact with families on 4<sup>th</sup> January to invite children to school
- the children of Critical Workers

**All pupils will return as normal for on-site learning from January 11<sup>th</sup>.**

### Children of critical workers in Years 7 and 8:

Pupils who are on-site in Years 7 and 8 will be supervised and supported, but will access the same learning experience as those at home. For many lessons this will be a live Teams lessons but in some circumstances, it will involve pupils working independently under the supervision of school staff. Pupils who are working from home accessing remote learning will be marked as an 'X' in the register which does not count as absence in the calculation of attendance. [Please click here to access the booking form for our critical workers provision](#); provision will start on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> January. **This form must be completed by Monday 21<sup>st</sup> December at 4pm to**



**secure a place. For children booked into our critical worker provision, attendance will be mandatory all week** and non-attendance will be followed up in the normal way and recorded as an absence unless the family is following direction from test and trace to self-isolate. In this case, and in the case of any illness, parents are asked to report in accordance with the school's existing policy.

### **Vulnerable Children:**

The list of those groups that may be considered as vulnerable can be accessed from the full guidance to schools by clicking [here](#).

It is our expectation that **all children on an EHCP, or those with a social worker will attend school as normal** and will be supported in the normal way to meet their needs. Parents/carers do not need to book a place for their child to attend school and absence should be reported in the normal way should they be unwell or isolating from 5<sup>th</sup> January.

Parents of vulnerable children, outside of children with an EHCP and those with a social worker who are expected to attend as normal, will be contacted individually to confirm attendance and arrangements on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> January.

### **Remote Learning:**

Remote learning will be delivered in line with pupils' timetables. Children in Years 7 and 8 are required, wherever possible, to have access to a device which will allow them to attend live lessons. Learning will follow the normal curriculum and pupil participation will be monitored by staff; either through attendance at live lessons or from the work submitted by pupils. All live lessons will be recorded and uploaded to the school website and can be accessed later for those unable to attend live. Any lessons which aren't delivered live will also be uploaded to the [remote learning section of the school website](#) as usual. The normal school behaviour policy applies. Pupils will receive 'positives' for completing the work set; sanctions will be issued in line with DfE guidance for those pupils who do not complete work. Where pupils are struggling to access the work set, we ask parents contact the subject teacher in the first instance. For more general concerns about remote learning, please email Mrs Kerr (Assistant Headteacher) [s.kerr@kirkburtonmiddleschool.co.uk](mailto:s.kerr@kirkburtonmiddleschool.co.uk)

### **Testing – guidance we have so far:**

The DfE posted its initial guidance to schools yesterday evening and I am therefore able to provide a summary to all of our parents:

- lateral flow testing is offered by schools to as many secondary school-age pupils and students at FE colleges as possible, starting in week commencing 4 January
- testing will not be mandated and all pupils will be expected to attend school or colleges from 11 January, regardless of whether a test has been undertaken
- those children expected to attend in week commencing 4 January, and the workforce, are prioritised for testing first
- information on next steps will follow in the coming days
- primary schools and early years provision will not be affected

Schools are expected to devote a staff team to undertake the testing process. The recommendation from the DfE is that a small core team of staff testers is supported by additional volunteers (for example governors) or paid agency staff brought in for this specific purpose. I would welcome contact from any of our parents that have successfully undertaken a recent enhanced DBS check and are willing to support the school in administering tests during the week beginning 5<sup>th</sup> January as a volunteer.

Schools will receive notification in due course of how they may order the tests and guidance in relation to their administration. Similarly, I am certain that information will be provided by the DfE regarding what requirement is needed for parental permission for children to undertake the test. I hope to provide

**further information prior to the school reopening on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> January.** In addition to those tests administered to children attending on-site provision, tests may in addition be made available to those children receiving remote education. Should this be possible, children accessing remote education during the week commencing 5<sup>th</sup> January will need to attend school to receive a test arriving at a scheduled time and then returning home directly following their test.

We currently understand that testing will only be available to secondary age children and not Year 6. We are however, seeking further clarification regarding our position as a middle school.

**Finally...**

I am certain that you may have further questions about the arrangements for children returning to school in January and arrangements for the administration of the lateral flow test. Hopefully, further information will be provided to schools in due course. Please be assured that my staff and I will always act in the best interests of our children and I will happily cascade further details as they are made available.

In the interim, please accept my best wishes for the Christmas Season and the hope that you and your families have a wonderful festive break.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in grey ink, appearing to read 'C Taylor', written in a cursive style.

Mr C Taylor  
Headteacher