



LONGBENTON HIGH SCHOOL

18 December 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

I am very sorry to be writing to you once again, now that term has ended. As you may be aware, we have had two separate, significant announcements from the DfE which have consequences for our students. This exceptionally late notice will, I am sure, be as frustrating for you as it is for us. The first announcement relates to the mass lateral flow testing of asymptomatic students and their 'close contacts' and the other relates to a staggered return in January. You will be wondering what this means for you and your child, so I wanted to write to you as early as I could.

Remote learning

We could not have predicted that the government would announce, without warning, that we would have to switch to remote learning in January, especially given that certain schools and councils have been threatened with legal action earlier this week for trying to do so before Christmas. We have been instructed by the DfE that Year 11 and Year 13 can come into school in the first week, as well as vulnerable/key worker children, but that all other students must stay at home. I believe that the government's announcement for this staggered start is in response to a predicted rise in infections (a so called 'third wave') after Christmas.

After extensive discussions both last night and this morning with other headteachers, the Local Authority, school governors and my senior team, I have decided that in January, students will return to school as follows:

- **Students in ALL year groups will stay at home on Monday 4th January for remote learning.** The DfE and Local Authority have advised that this date should be used for two key purposes. Firstly, to begin setting up our school 'testing site' and secondly, to ensure that remote learning provision is in place for all our students. We want to be able to deliver some live online lessons, and this gives staff the necessary planning and preparation time to ensure that this is in place for Tuesday 5th January.
- Students in **Years 11 and 13 will return to school on Tuesday January 5th** for face-to-face teaching.
- Students in **Years 7-10 as well as Year 12 will be taught remotely and shall return to school on Monday 11th January**
- If students have exams during the week beginning 4th January (eg BTEC), they will go ahead as normal and they can come in to school for these.

We will be in touch again on Monday 4th with instructions and more detail around what remote learning will look like across the week, including details about live lessons. In the first instance, on Monday 4th, this learning will be via Google Classroom. Year 11 and 13 teachers will be in touch directly with their classes on the morning of Monday 4th about what to expect for lessons that day, before face-to-face teaching resumes for them on Tuesday 5th. Year 13 students will be able to dial into a live lesson from home with their teachers on Monday 4th.

If you are the parent/carer of a vulnerable or key worker child and have no other provision for them in the first week of term, please let us know on Monday 4th January, by phoning the main school office, if you intend to send your child in to school from Tuesday 5th onwards.



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Covid Testing

As I am sure you will appreciate, we have had very little time to unpick this and all the associated implications. However, the expectation from the government is that we set up and staff our own COVID 19 testing site/facility, with no real clarity or fine detail about how to do this (or staff and fund it) yet. The handbook of guidance was only issued to schools yesterday afternoon and the first 'training session' was at 1pm today. They have provided no testing equipment, as yet, and we have no indication of when this will be arriving. I want to make it clear that whilst I am broadly in support of this initiative (in order to ensure that fewer days are lost to self-isolation), it is far too early to provide any specific details about how this will work in practice. I will of course keep you updated when I know more. Needless to say, we will not be in a position to begin testing students during the first (and probably even second) week of term.

I hope that this provides you with the information and reassurance you need for now.

In the meantime, I want to wish you a safe and happy Christmas. Please don't forget to watch our Christmas concert performance, which is here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DfGcJwEn3mQ>

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kelly Holbrook".

Kelly Holbrook

Headteacher