

5 January 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

Update

I am very grateful for the support you have shown today in enabling us to adapt, at such short notice, to the news late last night that we have now entered another period of national lockdown. As a school we are endeavouring to keep up with this advice and adapt to it, whilst also ensuring that a sense of normality remains. Naturally, due to the announcement last night, our updated back to school plans and our plans for Covid-19 'mass testing' for all pupils in the New Year have now changed. We know that the current lock down measures are likely to be in place until February half term at least. I think we need to be prepared for them to continue beyond this. Our 'mass testing' plans are now on hold, though it is likely this will continue to be an expectation of schools prior to pupils returning to school. We'll update you on this when it becomes necessary.

Weekly updates throughout lockdown

Throughout the last lockdown, weekly Friday updates were our main and consistent form of communication to all parents and carers. I will therefore look to provide these weekly updates once again starting next week. The subheadings are there to try and help direct parents to the information that is most pertinent to you and your son/daughter.

Should there be any pressing announcements to be made or important information to be given, this will still happen at the appropriate time during the week via the school website, social media platforms and school email in the main.

Year 11 Exams

On the summer exams, we are expecting a further announcement from the Secretary of State tomorrow. We don't know yet what he will say, and how much additional detail will be provided. What we do know, is that Boris Johnson said that "exams in the summer will not go ahead as normal". It did not say that all GCSE exams will be cancelled and Centre Assessed Grades will be used again.

Please do not assume at this stage therefore that Year 11 will have no external assessments in the summer.

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There is no doubt in my mind that the hard work that students have put in to acquire knowledge and develop their skills will be appropriately assessed, recognised and awarded. This may well include some exams and/or schools submitting centre assessed grades once again. Either way, it is imperative that Year 11 pupils continue to engage with every one of their lessons. If asked to do so, staff can only provide a centre assessed grade for how a pupil is doing at the time of asking, not how they might have been doing at the point at which lockdown started.

COVID-19 'mass testing' for all pupils

As mentioned above, the proposed programme of 'mass testing' is likely to resume prior to pupils returning to school. If this is the case, we will continue with our plan to test all pupils who want to participate.

However, prior to this happening, consent must be given for your child to have the Lateral Flow Test administered by trained Priory staff, so, if you have not already done so, can I ask you to provide your consent by completing the consent form in the following link:

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=id9BE8UjUUqLD9VLKIqMFp7MGKsaqzNDIcHS%20poNbUvdUQUc4OEtPS0IWWFFKM0Q2RkFRSDdKR0hZRi4u>

By doing this now, it will allow us to put our 'mass testing' into operation as swiftly as possible when we are asked to do so. To understand how your child's personal data is to be used in the event of both positive and negative tests and the rights that individuals have, please refer to our existing Privacy Notice on the school's website. Also, the DfE has recently sent some updated guidance in relation to the use of personal data and some FAQs regarding testing. We have put these alongside our Privacy Notice on the website for you reference too.

Back to school plans – All pupils

All pupils in all year groups will work remotely from home from tomorrow, Wednesday, 6 January until further notice.

Learning from home - 'Live Learning' @ Priory - All pupils – All year groups

All pupils in Years 7 – 11 must follow their ordinary timetable. As a reminder, staff will teach live lessons, take their registers as normal and be contactable through Microsoft Teams. Pupils are expected to be ready to engage in their learning for these sessions. Please refer to the end of this letter for a reminder of our expectations of 'Live Learning' @ Priory.

Please also be aware that pupils should:

- wear a headset/headphone where possible
- must join lessons by turning on their camera. This is required for both safeguarding purposes and to facilitate effective learning. (The teacher may later request that pupils switch off their camera during periods of independent work to reduce screen time etc. but this is always down to the professional judgement of the teacher in charge of that lesson.)

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Parents/carers:

Please do not 'attend' the lesson with your child. We understand that this is not always easy, but hope you appreciate the importance of trying to facilitate this for safeguarding reasons.

Normal protocols for contacting staff remain. On no occasion must a parent/carer use the streaming platform to attempt to make contact with a member of staff.

If a pupil is not adhering to the guidelines above, they will be dismissed from the live lesson and the reason for this explained to them. We would expect pupils to respond to this so that they can join the next live lesson of the day.

Learning for Life Lesson

To provide staff and pupils more time to finalise their morning work and prepare for Lesson 6 in the afternoon, pupils will not be expected to log into their normal Learning for Life lesson in the afternoon. Instead, pupils can utilise a new free resource to complement the work that would normally be undertaken in this session. The Exchange is a new web series that explores subjects that matter to young people in a direct, engaging and informative way. Topics discussed are linked to our Learning for Life curriculum and include topics such as consent, body confidence, period stigma, bullying and lots more. Each episode features a pair of interviews – one with a public figure who has experience of or has spoken out about the issue under discussion, and another with an expert.

The series will hopefully offer a valuable and much-needed resource to pupils. All episodes are being hosted on www.jointheexchange.co.uk and on [YouTube](#), [Instagram](#) and [TikTok](#).

Illness

If your child is ill and cannot engage in the live lessons, parents and carers must still phone into school and follow our normal procedures. In all other cases, attendance at all lessons is compulsory.

Key Workers

We will continue do all we can to support those whose work is critical to the COVID-19 response, if they cannot keep their child safe at home. This remains an offer to parents and carers working in these critical sectors at this time. However, with staff now teaching live lessons our resources are limited and we can only do what we can do within the resources that are available to us. Priority for places therefore may need to be given to certain families, with places only being offered to a smaller group where the need is most urgent, for example, the children of A&E nurses and doctors. Provision in school remains the last resort. Should you need to apply for a place for your son or daughter, please do so by midday on Thursday, 7 January by completing the form via the following link:

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=id9BE8UjUUqLD9VLKIqMFp7MGKsaqzNDIcHSpOlbUvdUOUdUMUICRzFZVTZKUIRQWjJJRU5FT0FTSy4u>

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Vulnerable Pupils

Our pastoral team in school will contact families throughout lockdown to offer continued support where appropriate.

Voucher scheme to support free school meals pupils

Again, our pastoral team in school will contact certain families directly to ensure pupils do not go hungry during this period of home learning.

Finally

I would like to thank you once again for your continued support.

In addition to a highly dedicated staff team who continue to go above and beyond, we are grateful and encouraged by the support and kind words we have received from many of you in this time of uncertainty.

As I have said before, we here at Priory will continue to strive to provide the opportunities for our pupils to flourish even if we cannot be physically present in the building.

I continue to wish you and your families all the very best,

Yours faithfully



Mr M Eastham
Headteacher

Learning from home - 'Live Learning' @ Priory – a reminder of expectations

Live lessons need not last an hour, there may be an instructional period at the beginning of the lesson and then the pupils may be tasked with doing something for a period of time. The average 'live lesson' will last approximately 30 minutes and the teacher should then be available for live chat through the text or video function to answer any questions pupils may have.

Just as when they are in school, we have the highest expectations of pupils' attitude to and behaviour for learning.

When they are in a live lesson they must:

- Be dressed appropriately, for example, no pyjamas or revealing clothing-you may turn your camera off completely if you wish.
- Preferably, be in a room which is used by the whole family, for example, the dining room, not a bedroom.
- Join the lesson at the advertised starting time. We will follow your normal timetable.

- Mute your microphone when the teacher is talking to avoid any background noise or feedback disturbing the lesson.
- Do not add comments, emojis or contribute to the lesson unless you are invited to do so.
- Do not do anything to purposefully disturb the learning of others. You will be sanctioned if you do so and your parents informed via Synergy.
- Share your work with your teachers if you are requested to do so. For example, send a Chat or email with an attachment.
- Maintain the Priory Standard for the presentation of your work.
- Respond to any feedback given by your teachers about how to improve or develop your work.
- Once the live part of a lesson has ended, if you are struggling with any of the work, message your teacher using the Chat function in Teams and the teacher will either respond to you in writing or may give you a video call back.