



St Edmund Arrowsmith Catholic High School

Prepare the way of the Lord

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4 January 2021

Dear Parents/ Carers,

On behalf of all the staff and governors I would like to wish you all a very Happy New Year. I know we are all wishing that 2021 will bring an end to the pandemic and that a more 'normal' life can be resumed, however, while we must hold on to our hopes for a brighter future, I am afraid that there will be some significant disruption to your child's return to school.

Following my last letter on the 18th December and as you will have read in the media over the Christmas break, schools received guidance on the 23rd and 30th December 2020. The government have stated that this guidance is 'subject to change' due to the rapidly changing pandemic situation, so please do not be surprised if I write to you again very soon. I would like to apologise for the ever changing messages I have had to make in my communications to you, but responding to the government's guidance is proving very challenging. I know I can count on your patience and understanding and thank you for your continued support; it is greatly appreciated.

Following the latest guidance, **the plans for the start of term** are as follows:-

Wednesday 6th January 2021- Staff Inset Day

Thursday 7th & Friday 8th January 2021 - Teaching staff will teach years 7-11 via Microsoft Teams following their normal timetable. Key worker and vulnerable pupils will be taught in school. (If your child falls into the key worker child/vulnerable pupil category, and you have not already done so, please complete this [form](#).) Children in Y8-Y11 that attended in the Summer Term DO NOT need to complete as we already have these details.

w/c Monday 11th January 2021 - Year 11 pupils return to school, as well as the key worker and vulnerable pupils. Years 7-10 will continue to have Microsoft Teams lessons.

w/c Monday 18th January 2021 - Pupils from all year groups return to school.

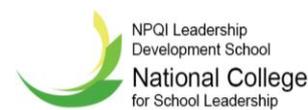
Lateral Flow testing

We have been given the huge logistical task of setting up mass and serial testing for all staff and pupils this term. To help us with the feasibility of this, I am asking parents who would be willing to volunteer for this to complete a form by clicking [here](#) to allow us to determine how many parents would be willing to help with the testing from Monday 11th January 2021. **(Please complete by Thursday 7th January.)** Training will be given to all volunteers.

I will inform you of the testing arrangements as soon as our plans have been finalised.

The tests are 'lateral flow tests' which should return a result in 20-30 minutes. Pupils would 'self-administer' a swab test under supervision.

There are two phases to the proposed testing, an initial 'mass testing' of all staff and pupils. These are two tests three days apart. Then there is 'serial testing'. The idea is that contacts of confirmed cases could still attend school using one of these tests each day as an alternative to self-isolating for 10 days. For your child to be tested in school you will need to complete a **consent form**, please click [here](#) to complete the form. You can find accompanying documentation in the testing guidance attached to this email, to help you to make an informed decision. The tests are not compulsory, but they are to be 'encouraged'.





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There is no way this amount of testing can be achieved with our existing staffing levels and I am awaiting further guidance from the government about how this can be achieved, hence the number of volunteers will very much dictate our response.

Keeping your child safe whilst providing the best possible educational experience is the balance we are all working really hard to achieve and these are our initial plans to maintain this balance.

I know you will all be anxious to make arrangements for your own work commitments over the next few weeks and I hope this letter assists you in making some plans. Once again, I would like to thank you for all your support and cooperation, in these strange and difficult times it is even more important that we all work closely together in our 'Eddies' family to ensure we are all looking after each other. I am always extremely proud of our school community but never more so than over the last 4 months when our partnership has strengthened even further.

Yours faithfully,

M J Dumican
Headteacher

