



THE PRIORY SCHOOL

D O R K I N G

Headteacher: Mrs J Trimnell

18th December 2020

Dear parents and carers

I know I only wrote to you last week explaining that it would be my last letter for 2020. However, due to the various announcements from the DfE yesterday I felt it important to update you on how they affect your child in January.

Some schools and councils, notably Greenwich in London, have been threatened with court for suggesting that their schools could switch to remote learning in the week before Christmas. It is ironic that yesterday without warning, the Government has advised a staggered start to the new term in January, with some students learning remotely. The Government has said that primary school pupils and students in exam Years 11 and 13 will return to school immediately after Christmas but that other secondary aged students will return the following week (11th January). Our plans are slightly different for good reason.

Arrangements for The Priory School:

After discussion with senior colleagues I have decided that in January, students will return to school as follows:

- Students in Years 11 & 13 will return to school on Monday 4th January as planned.
- Students in Year 7, 8, 9, 10 and 12 will be taught remotely following the normal school timetable on Show My Homework from Monday 4th January until Friday 8th January 2021 and will return to school on Monday 11th January. Students need to access work from here labelled "Remote learning." Work will be set daily, with some teachers providing a link for virtual lessons and others setting appropriate work.
- Staff have spoken to Year 7 students today showing them where they need to go to access their remote learning work.
- Our Learning Support Team has allocated students who we feel are vulnerable or have Learning Support needs. They will be phoning students every day during this week to ensure they are okay. Please ensure that your child emails their teacher directly if they are struggling with any work. Staff emails can be found on the school website.

I am truly sorry that many students will once again be missing face to face teaching. Vulnerable students and children of critical workers will be allowed to attend. If you feel that your child falls into this category, please email me directly at jt1@priorycofe.com before the end of 28th December. Children who fall into this category will continue to follow their normal timetable in school but will be completing the "remote learning" set on SMHW.

Free School Meals

If your child is entitled to a free school meal you will receive communication from Mrs Chart and an email will be sent to you around 4th January. If you would prefer the voucher to be sent home then please email kct@priorycofe.com The canteen will be serving minimal food for Year 11 and 13 during this week.

Cont

Year 11 Mock Exams

Year 11 mock exams are scheduled to begin on Tuesday 5th January, these will continue as planned. Our teachers have been working with Year 11 to prepare them for these exams. Planning is in place to maximise the teaching time following the mocks and to ensure our students are fully prepared for their final exams.

Testing

You may have seen it announced also that students and teachers will have access to mass testing from January. Specifically, that means that staff will be tested weekly (with results taking 30 minutes) and students who are identified as close contacts of someone testing positive, can be tested daily for 7 consecutive days and remain in school if they test negative. This testing would be optional, but those not consenting would be subject to the normal 10-day self-isolation.

I support the aim of testing to ensure that even fewer days are lost to self-isolation. The problem comes with the timing and nature of the Government's announcement. Specifically:

- Schools must administer the tests themselves, allocate or employ at least 9 staff to do the tests, and identify a suitable space where testing can take place
- We received notice of this Wednesday, and the handbook for schools with guidance, today.
- A training session has been offered at 1:00pm today when many schools have broken up for Christmas

As you can imagine, we have had no time to even think about this and I refuse to have my staff working and planning during the Christmas holidays. We will return to this issue in January and more information will be forthcoming then. We will do our best to make testing work within the constraints we have. If any parents are able to volunteer to help run our testing programme, please email Mrs Abbott at lat@priorycofe.com

I hope I have provided you with the information you need. If you do have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to contact me.

I will write again in January updating you with the relevant consent forms which families will need to sign, as well as any further updates.

Best wishes



Mrs J Trimmell
Acting Headteacher



enquiries@priorycofe.com



West Bank, Dorking, RH4 3DG



01306 887 337

