



31 December 2020

Dear parents and carers

I hope that my letter finds you and your family well and that you have had an enjoyable Christmas.

I am sure you will have seen the announcement from the Department of Education about the delayed return to school in January. As with the announcement in December this information arrived late yesterday allowing only one working day to implement it and inform parents before the bank holiday weekend. I can only apologise for this short notice and for any impact this has on families. The key messages taken directly from the Department of Education statement are outlined below:

- during the first week of term, beginning on or just after 4 January, secondary schools and colleges will focus on the rollout of testing to help find asymptomatic cases. They will provide face-to-face education for vulnerable children and children of critical workers and prioritise resources for remote education for exam year groups in line with what they would receive in class and to all other years as resources permit
- during the second week of term, beginning on 11 January, secondary schools and colleges will start their programme of testing, prioritising staff, those students in schools and colleges and the exam cohorts. Schools and colleges will be able to bring students back to face-to-face tuition as testing is rolled out. Remote education will be provided to all pupils this week prior to return to school or college
- all students will return to secondary schools and colleges for face-to-face education by 18 January
- vocational exams scheduled for the first week of January will go ahead as planned

The rationale behind the delayed start is to allow schools more time to roll out the mass testing process that schools are to oversee in order to break chains of transmission and detect asymptomatic cases enabling face to face education to resume safely. I have outlined below what this will mean for education at Longdean for the first few weeks back as well as providing information about the testing programme.

Teaching & Learning:

Week beginning 4 January 2021

All staff, unless they are shielding, will be in school from Monday 4 January 2021.

Vulnerable students with an EHCP or allocated Social Worker are entitled to be in school from Monday 4 – Friday 8 January. Full uniform must be worn. They will be supervised by link TAs and Longdean staff.

Pupil Absence please call

Social Media:

Children of Critical Workers are entitled to attend school from Tuesday 5 January – Friday 8 January. Full uniform must be worn. Students will be supervised by link TAs and Longdean staff. Please sign up using the Microsoft Form sent earlier this week. It will close at 6pm on Friday. Please do not be offended if we ask for proof of occupation.

If any student arrives on Monday or Tuesday not on our lists we will contact parents and send the students home as we will base our staffing on the number of responses.

Monday 4 January

- All students will need to register via Teams between 8.30 – 9.50am. Students only need to log on and state they are present. They can then log off and begin work set on Show My Homework.
- Years 7 – 10 & 12 will then have work set on Show My Homework for Monday only.
- Year 11 & 13 will receive live lessons on Teams from 9.50 (period 2 onwards).

Tuesday 5 January - Friday 8 January

Registration from Tuesday onward is still on Teams but from 8.40 – 8.50am

- Years 7 & 8 - will be taught remotely on Teams for Tuesday & Wednesday as per their school timetable. They will not be taught Thursday and Friday in order to begin mass testing of staff and students
- Year 9 & 10 – will be taught remotely on Teams for Tuesday & Wednesday and will be invited to join their option lesson on Friday 8 January. They will not be taught on Thursday
- Year 12 – Will be taught remotely on Teams for Tuesday & Wednesday as per their school timetable. They will not be taught on Thursday.
- Year 11 & 13 – Will be taught remotely on Teams from Tuesday to Friday (Thursday for Post 16) as per their school timetable

Week beginning 11 January 2021

- Vulnerable and critical worker students are entitled to be in school all week. A new Microsoft Form will be issued in week beginning 4 January 2021
- Years 7 – 10 & Yr12 will be taught remotely on Teams as per their school timetable. Registration is still on Teams from 8.40 – 8.50am
- Years 11 & 13 will be in school all week in full uniform from 8.30am

Week beginning 18 January 2021

- All students in school as per timetable.

Other than Monday 4 January, all remote lessons will be taught via Teams with all invitations being sent to school email addresses only. Students are also expected to attend registration on line from 8.40am. Attendance and good behaviour are expected and will be followed up and sanctioned if necessary.

If you are a critical worker please use the Microsoft Form that was sent earlier this week to sign your child up for a place in school. The form will remain open until 6pm on Friday 1 January 2021. A new form for week beginning 11 January will be sent out next week.

Examinations

Public examinations on Friday 8 January and in week beginning 11 January will take place. Remaining preliminary examinations are likely to take place in week beginning 18 January. Mrs Embrey will write separately to the students involved in these.

Free School Meals & Catering

If your child is eligible for free school meals we will issue you with a voucher for the first two weeks of term if you are in Years 7 – 10 and Year 12. Year 11 & 13 will receive a voucher for the first week back.

Please note that the school canteen will be open for students and staff from 4 January but with a reduced offering to reflect the numbers on site each week. Students will observe the usual break and lunchtimes.

Mass testing programme

As mentioned at the start of my letter a major driver in this Government decision is to give schools more time to roll out the mass testing programme. We will aim to begin testing staff, critical worker and vulnerable students from Thursday 7 January. We will also seek to test staff over the first week back. In week beginning 11 January we will look to test Year 11 & 13 students and we may begin to invite students in other years in for testing.

Alongside this letter I have also sent you a letter today explaining more about the testing programme. I have included a registration form and consent letter with this. If, having read the information, you would like your child to be tested, please complete these two forms and return them to school at the following address masstestingregistrationandconsent@longdean.herts.sch.uk.

If you are a parent and would be interested in supporting the school in delivering this testing programme please let us know using the email address above. Parents would be paid for this work.

Coronavirus symptoms & preventative measures in school

Please can I reiterate the importance of students wearing a face mask when they are on site in communal areas and in classrooms if they wish to. They also need to ensure they have a bottle of sanitiser and a packet of tissues with them when they return to school as well as an umbrella and coat as students will still be outside in unstructured times regardless of the weather. They must remain in their year bubbles, adhere to the one way system and be fully self sufficient at all times in school.

Should your child show any symptoms of Covid 19 (new continuous cough, high temperature, loss or change in sense of taste and smell) they are not to attend school. If your child tests positive for Covid 19 you must inform us using the following address: covidreporting@longdean.herts.sch.uk

And finally...

I hope that the information in this letter provides you an overview of what we intend to do to facilitate a smooth and safe return to school next week. Once more I apologise for not being able to open fully on Monday 4 January, the short notice and any inconvenience this causes. I should also add that these plans are liable to change as we receive further updates from Government. I will write again next week with further details about the return to school and the testing programme.

Best wishes for a Happy New Year and as always I thank you for your unwavering support at this time.



Graham Cunningham
Headteacher