

Ref: RV/hw

31 December 2020



Dear Parents

As the year draws to a close, I wanted to explain the details of our return to school in the New Year, in light of Government announcements regarding the coronavirus pandemic.

As you will have seen, the Secretary of State for Education, Gavin Williamson, yesterday announced plans to protect education and fight the virus.

He stated that, *'With case rates rising across the country, [the government has decided to] push back the staggered return for secondary schools by one week to give more time for the rollout of testing.*

- *during the first week of term, beginning on 5 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 the 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'*

Therefore, **school will be open from 8.30am - 3.05pm Tuesday 5th January-Friday 8th January 2021 for critical worker and vulnerable pupils only**. These pupils will be working on a computer in school accessing their lessons online. If you feel you are eligible for a critical worker/vulnerable place for your child and need one, please email Miss Jo McCue on jmccue@btrcc.lancs.sch.uk with the days you need a place and what hours you need. This information must be emailed to Miss Jo McCue by 10am on Monday 4th January 2020 at the latest.

All other pupils will not attend school and will be educated through home-learning. As the Secretary of State has indicated, we will prioritise our resources for remote education for Year 11 'in line with what they would receive in class and to all other years as resources permit.' We will endeavour to provide live lessons through Teams for Year 11 wherever possible until their return to school.

Other Years' learning will be predominantly provided through Show My Homework from the 4th – 8th January. From the 11th – 15th January we will endeavour to provide the majority of their learning through live Teams lessons.

Year 11 will return to school for face to face learning, as normal, on Monday 11th January.

At this stage it is envisaged that **all other Year groups will return on Monday 18th January**. These pupils will continue to access remote learning at home for this period.

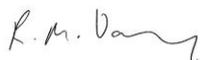
The government has also announced that they want voluntary, rapid testing to be delivered in all secondary schools initially, so that:

- all staff will be tested each week
- all students will be tested twice, within five days, at the start of this term
- going forward, all close contacts of positive cases can be tested each day for seven days and so avoid the need for self-isolation unless they test positive

As a school we will be preparing for the roll out of testing for pupils next week. I will send you further details regarding testing shortly.

Can I reassure you that although the coming term will have its challenges, we will work together in the best interests of your children. As a community we need to get through these next difficult months, looking forward to the roll out of vaccinations and a return to a more normal way of life by the end of the academic year. Stay safe; thank you for your ongoing support and patience.

Yours sincerely



Richard Varey
Headteacher