



Head of Academy
Mrs H McVicar
Ref HMV/ljo

18 December 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

I hope this letter finds you and your families well.

I am sorry to have to write to you on the final day of term. You may have watched the announcements from the Department of Education over the last week with a growing sense of uncertainty and I am sure you will all be wondering what this means for you and your child in January.

Yesterday afternoon, without warning, the Government 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, years 11 and 13, will return to school immediately after Christmas but that other secondary aged students will not return until the following week on Monday 11th January 2021.

Arrangements for the January return at Netherthorpe School

Year Group	Tuesday 5 th - Fri 8 th January	Return to school
7	Students will be taught remotely, following their normal school timetable with most lessons being delivered via MS Teams.	Mon 11th January 2021
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11	Students will return to school on Tuesday 5th January as planned.	
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I am truly sorry for the disruption this is causing, particularly for those year groups that have already missed face to face teaching this year, and are now required to do so again. This directive from the government may be concerning but as the underlying reason for the staggered start will be to halt the rise in infections after Christmas it is best we are cautious.

Children of Critical workers and Vulnerable students*

Some pupils in Years 7-10 will still return to school on Tuesday 5th January for their learning including those whose parents are critical workers and those pupils with Education Health Care Plans. If you are a critical worker and would like to arrange a place for your child between Tuesday 5th January and Friday 8th January, please complete the **Critical Workers form below by 3pm on Wednesday 30 December**. These students will be required to attend full time and if they are unable to attend parent/carers will need to inform the school of absence as normal.

Critical workers form: <https://forms.gle/LRBkxPych2h5mmok7>

*The full list of vulnerable student categories is captured in the government's guidance under the sub-heading 'Schools with secondary age pupils'.

[Schools and childcare settings: return in January 2021 - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/schools-and-childcare-settings-return-in-january-2021)
(www.gov.uk)

Students in Year 11 taking Health & Social Care and Creative i-media examinations

For those Y11 students who are sitting their official exams week commencing 11th January, these will go ahead as normal and we will be withdrawing students from their timetables for either a morning or full day to allow them to engage in an intensive revision session with their teachers to support them to prepare for the exam.

Remote Learning

Most of our students are now used to accessing lessons remotely. For those students/parents that need further support, please refer to the remote learning guide we have placed on our website with the following link:

[Netherthorpe School - Remote Learning Guide](#)

Students should follow their normal timetable (5 x 1 hour periods per day, logging on at the time the lesson would take place). Some lessons will be live, others will have materials or recordings by the teacher attached. Students should check Show My Homework and emails for any updates.

If your child does not have access to a device or the internet, please let us know and we will work with you to support them.

If your child is in receipt of free school meals, please let us know if you would like some support during this period and we will put together a food parcel for you to collect.

Covid-19 testing update

You may have also seen in the announcements this week that students and teachers will have access to mass testing from January. This testing will be optional, but those not consenting would be subject to the normal 10 day self-isolation period.

Whilst we fully support the aim of testing to ensure that fewer days are lost to self-isolation, the problem comes with the timing and nature of the Government announcement. Specifically;

- Schools must administer the tests themselves, allocate or employ at least nine staff to do the tests, and identify a suitable space where testing can take place.
- We received notice of this on Wednesday and an introductory handbook for schools was shared yesterday.

As you can imagine, we have had no time to consider this and will not receive further guidance until next week. We will return to this issue in January when more information should be forthcoming and will do our best to make testing work within the constraints we have.

Finally

I am truly sorry that these announcements appear so rushed but as you are aware we only received notification of these decisions yesterday.

I hope I have provided you with the information you need in the meantime, have a wonderful Christmas and a well-deserved break.

Yours sincerely

H. McVicar

H. McVicar
Head of Academy

