



Head of Academy
Mrs H McVicar

Ref HMV/ljo

4 January 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

I hope this letter finds you safe and well and you have managed to have a restful and enjoyable Christmas.

Before I go any further can I acknowledge and apologise for the extraordinary nature of contacting you at this late stage before the start of term. The Christmas period has proved to be a very fast moving situation, with regards to the government announcements around school COVID-19 testing and the return to school, therefore I wanted to ensure that I could give you the most up to date information as we start the term.

Further to the announcement on 31 December, schools have been directed to change their arrangements for the start of term across the country. Essentially, this pushes back all the dates by one week from those we outlined on the final day of term. I have summarised the new arrangements below followed by further details;

Year Group	w/c 4 Jan (from Tues 5 Jan)	w/c 11 th Jan	w/c 18 th Jan
7	Students will not return to school	Remote Learning from home will continue	Return to School
8			Return to School
9			Return to School
10			Return to School
11	Remote learning from home, with resources prioritised for exam classes.	Return to school	Continue at School
12	Remote learning from home, with resources prioritised for exam classes.	Remote Learning from home will continue	Return to School
13		Return to school	Continue at School
EHCP and vulnerable students who have been contacted directly plus critical worker children who have requested a place	Return to School	Continue at School	Continue at School

Please note that all dates and plans are based on current guidance and could be subject to further change with updated government/Department of Education directives.

Monday 4th January 2021

Staff Professional Development Day. No remote Learning & school closed to all students.

Tuesday 5th January 2021

Students will not return to school.

There will be some exceptions to this including students with Education Health Care Plans and vulnerable students. The school will have contacted you directly if this applies to your child. Critical worker parents are also able to request a school place (please see information below).

It is not compulsory for these students to attend school during this time and I know that there is continued anxiety regarding the risk of transmission. Whilst we warmly welcome all those who attend, we will of course support parent and carer decision making, and only insist on children's attendance on an individual basis if there are certain circumstances, which mean that they are clearly better served, by being in school.

School transport will run as normal for those attending and canteen services will be available.

Remote Learning

Whilst the school will remain open for staff next week, all year groups will access learning from home in line with our remote learning strategy. Whilst we will prioritise learning for exam groups as directed by the Department of Education, we do feel that we have the capacity to ensure that we provide some provision for all year groups.

Students should be ready to learn from 8.45am and follow their normal timetable.

Any live lessons on MS teams will be scheduled and students should check their email/ show my homework for notification. All other work will be posted on our Satchel Show My Homework platform so that students can access it when they are scheduled to do so on their timetables.

We would welcome your support in ensuring your child engages with all remote learning that is set. 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](#)

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.

Critical worker places

Due to the growth in positive corona virus cases, both nationally and locally, and combined with the change to tier 4 in our area, students are advised to stay at home to reduce the risk of transmission. However, critical worker parent/carers can request a place for their child if necessary. Thank you to those parent/carers who completed the critical worker survey sent out prior to Christmas to indicate eligibility and request a place for your child in school from Tuesday 5th January to Friday 15th January 2021. If you no longer require this place, please let us know asap to support with planning.

Provision will be put in place for your child to access the remote learning work in school and supervision will be provided. **Please note: that students will not be in face to face lessons with their normal teachers.**

If you still require a place, your child should attend school as normal in full uniform and enter school, via the gate near the main office. A member of staff will be available to provide further instructions on their arrival. You will not require PE kit.

If you have not yet requested a place and need to do so, please ensure you have completed the **Critical Workers form below by 4pm today**. 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/LRBkxPsych2h5mmok7>

*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 \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/schools-and-childcare-settings-return-in-january-2021)

Week beginning Monday 11th January 2021

All students in Year 11 and 13 should attend school as normal.

**We will also look to facilitate attendance of those students in year 12 who are sitting external examinations in Health and Social Care but further information will follow.*

Timetables will run as normal in year pods and all the usual arrangements will apply, including provision of school transport and catering facilities.

Continued provision will be made for the children of critical workers and those requiring additional support.

Remote Learning will continue this week for **students in Years 7-10 and 12**.

Week beginning Monday 18th January 2021

Full attendance: All students will return to 'face to face' learning in school at Netherthorpe. Further details will be sent out nearer the time regarding any updates on arrangements for the return.

Important changes to face covering requirements

Please note that due to the introduction of tier 4 restrictions, as of Tuesday 5th January, all students and staff will be required to wear face coverings in school whilst walking around site and in all communal areas to reduce the risk of transmission. This will be mandatory and whilst we have a few in school for emergency situations, it is the parent/carer responsibility to provide your child with an appropriate face covering. Those students with exception cards will be exempt as current policy allows.

Whilst the government guidance advises that due to the forward facing seating arrangements, face coverings should be removed during lessons to aid learning, we will continue to allow staff and students to wear face coverings in class for their own reassurance.

Information for Y11-13 students taking official examinations in January

All scheduled vocational examinations will go ahead as normal and we will send out more information regarding this to those concerned including how we will further support your child during this period of disruption.

Free School Meals Provision

For any families who are in receipt of free school meals, if you require any support, please contact the school as food parcels will continue to be provided on request.

Covid-19 testing Update

Part of the government rationale for extending the staggered start to term is to provide school leaders with more time to prepare for the rollout of mass testing in schools. The intention is that this will help find asymptomatic cases and break chains of transmission, making it as safe as possible to return to face-to-face education.

Full guidance from the DfE has now been published but is subject to regular change at this stage. In the next few days, we will send you out further details from the government and ask you to indicate whether or not you will be consenting for your child to participate in testing. This will give us an idea of the numbers we will need to manage during this programme in school.

Positive confirmed cases

It remains of vital importance that the school is informed immediately of any pupils who receive a positive test result and to ensure that they do not attend school if themselves or anyone in the household is displaying symptoms.

Thank you as always for your continued support, I would also like to take the opportunity to wish a Happy New Year to you, your family and loved ones. I sincerely hope that 2021 is the year in which we can return to some form of normality- with a sense of pride in how we have faced this situation together and the collective resolve to emerge stronger than ever as a whole school community.

Best Wishes

H McVicar

Head of Academy