
Rob Pavey, Headteacher

18 December 2020

Dear Parents and Carers of all Years,

I am very sorry to have to email you so soon, and to have to contradict what I said in yesterday's end of term letter. I said that as far as I was concerned, term would start for every student on schedule on Tuesday 5th January. Official guidance from the DfE arrived at 6.25 last night saying that it should **only be years 11 and 13 for the first week of term**, and the rest of school must be back in from Monday 11th January. If your child is in any year group other than 11 or 13, please ensure that they join their Google Classrooms for the first week of term. The irony of the situation is not lost on me; I'm sure we have all also noted that this guidance was produced after the end of term for most secondary schools, who are taking today as an INSET day.

You will also have read that lateral flow tests will be rolled out for all staff and pupils from January 4th. I think this is an excellent idea in principle, but the guidance has been issued without any regard for *how* this can be delivered. The initial guidance would mean significant disruption to every lesson of the week and taking on a dozen members of staff (unfunded). I tried a test myself this morning, and I believe that we can probably deliver this through tutor time, if children are allowed to administer it themselves: it is a bit fiddly, but no harder than a lot of the science experiments we get our students to do. I will be in touch with more details, parental permission and a common sense plan in due course. The only thing I can be certain of is that this will not be in place by January 4th.

In good news, the government actually delivered on its promise of laptops for schools facing closure! They arrived yesterday afternoon. Please therefore get in touch with the appropriate year team if your child does not have access to their own laptop for the duration of the school day, and we will have much more capacity to loan machines from January. There has unfortunately been no movement on the large consignment of Lenovo devices that we have ordered.

I hope you will not hear from me again until the New Year, and that you and your families have a very good break.

Best wishes,

Rob Pavey
Headteacher