



St Robert of Newminster Catholic School and Sixth Form College



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Head Teacher: Mr. D. Juric
Chair of Governors: Mr. G. Moorhouse

18th December 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

You will have no doubt seen in the media various reports regarding the very recent government announcement over a staggered start to term in January, and rapid testing in schools. We have been informed that more detailed operational guidance will be issued shortly. However, we understand that as parents and carers you would appreciate some clarification over what to expect, before the end of term.

Therefore, this letter will outline, in as much detail as we are currently able to give, what the first week of term will look like. This will hopefully at least give you a level of clarity. We may have to update you further, if necessary, over the Christmas holiday period, once further government announcements are made.

Based on the government guidance issued so far:

- **Monday 4th January will now be an INSET Day and school will be closed to all students. Unlike other INSET Days, students should access that day's lessons remotely via their Teams account.** We realise this is shorter notice than we would normally give for an INSET Day, but in line with the government guidance, we believe that this is necessary if we are to efficiently and safely prepare for the proposed testing in schools.
- **All Year 11 and Year 13 students will be in school every day that week (Tuesday–Friday).**
- **Any students, regardless of their year group, who have an exam scheduled for the first week, should come in for the start of the school day on the day of the exam. They will remain in school until the end of the school day.**
- **Vulnerable and Critical Worker children will be in school every day that week (Tuesday-Friday).** (See further information below.)
- **Students in Years 7 to 10, and Year 12, will be at home during the first week of term, and will access their work remotely.** (Further information below.)
- School start and finish times, uniform, routines, etc. will all be exactly the same as normal for those students in school.
- School buses will be running.
- A suitable arrangement will be put in place for those students working from home, who are eligible for Free School Meals. Details will follow before the start of next term.

Further guidance will be issued by the government to schools, addressing how the testing of students will be rolled out. This roll out is expected to happen during the first week of term, and will initially address at least Year 11 and Year 13 students. Once we have more information, we will share it with you.



The details above are based on the information the government has given us so far. If there is any national change of plan, which affects these arrangements, we shall let you know in as timely a fashion as possible.

Notes:

The definition of vulnerable children is:

- are assessed as being in need under section 17 of the Children Act 1989, including children and young people who have a child in need plan, a child protection plan or who are a looked-after child
- have an education, health and care (EHC) plan
- have been identified as otherwise vulnerable by educational providers or local authorities (including children's social care services), and who could therefore benefit from continued full-time attendance, this might include:
 - children and young people on the edge of receiving support from children's social care services or in the process of being referred to children's services
 - adopted children or children on a special guardianship order
 - those at risk of becoming NEET ('not in employment, education or training')
 - those living in temporary accommodation
 - those who are young carers
 - those who may have difficulty engaging with remote education at home (for example, due to a lack of devices or quiet space to study)
 - care leavers
 - other children and young people at the provider and local authority's discretion including pupils who need to attend to receive support or manage risks to their mental health

Please note from the list above that this includes students who may not be able to access remote work/lessons from home (for whatever reason).

If your child falls into one of these categories, and you intend to send them in every day, **please email school@str.bwcet.com by Sunday 3 January** to inform us. Please put **Vulnerable Provision** in the title box of your email. Please note that if children in this category are coming into school, they must come in every day (Tuesday-Friday). We cannot accept requests for students to be in some days and not others. If you do not inform us that you are sending your child in, then we will not be expecting them, and therefore you will not be contacted if they do not arrive in the morning.

The Critical Worker groups can be found by following this link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision>

If your child falls into one of these categories, and you intend to send them in every day, **please email school@str.bwcet.com by Sunday 3 January** to inform us. Please put **Critical Worker Provision** in the title box of your email. Please note that if children in this category are coming into school, they must come in every day (Tuesday-Friday). We cannot accept requests for students to be in some days and not others. If you do not inform us that you are sending your child in, then we will not be expecting them, and therefore you will not be contacted if they do not arrive in the morning.

Remote Working

On the INSET Day, 4th January, all students will access work remotely via Teams, as is already the case.

From Tuesday 5th January, teachers will stream lessons live, enabling Yr7-10 & 12 students to join remotely from home. Students must follow their normal timetable each day and join the live Teams lessons where scheduled. The duration of each lesson will be 50 minutes. This will allow for a short screen break and time for students to access their next lesson. There may be occasions where teachers are unable to stream live lessons. If this is the case, students will be informed on the Team channel and given further instructions.

Teachers will schedule the lessons, and the link to join the session will appear on the Teams channel. Students will see this when they access their subject Teams. It is important students check messages in their subject Teams throughout the self-isolation period. Students must complete their work in their exercise books. Students must have their equipment ready for each lesson. If a student does not have their exercise book please complete the work on paper. Please help students get organised for the week.

It is vital students attend online and normal attendance procedures will be followed if students do not attend the live lessons. Students must be punctual to the online lesson. Students must follow the MS Teams Code of

Conduct. Sanctions will be issued on return to school should any student misbehave during a live lesson. The Code of Conduct is available in the *Teams Learning Portal* [here](#).

If you have multiple siblings who attend the school and do not have enough devices to go round, one child should access the online lesson. The other child(ren) can either access the uploaded work via Teams, as normal, at a later time, or can come into school, under the *Vulnerable Provision* (see instructions above).

All students have access to Teams, as it is part of our school Office 365 suite. Students must access Teams through their new Office 365 email account. Teams can be accessed from a tablet, mobile phone or PC. If there are any issues with usernames/passwords please do let us know. A student guide on how to join MS Teams live lessons can be found in the *Teams Learning Portal* [here](#). If you have limited or no internet access, or students do not have a suitable device to access their Teams lesson, or you have any technical issues, please do let us know by emailing school@str.bwcet.com. There may be a few technical glitches here and there. However, I am sure we can count on your continued support with this undertaking.

Self-isolation

Regardless of all the information above, the usual rules in relation to positive tests and self-isolation of close contacts will still apply as normal. The school should continue to be informed in the usual way of any such cases.

Thank you for your attention. I realise that this is a lot of information to take in all in one go. However, the suddenness of the recent announcement has not given us much time to communicate these messages to you. As stated above, we will continue to update you as regularly as necessary, but no more than necessary, over the holiday period. I hope you all have a Happy Christmas.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Juric', written in a cursive style.

Mr D Juric
Head Teacher