

31st December 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

Returning to School in January

Despite the disruption during this Christmas break, I hope you have had a chance to relax and spend some enjoyable time with your families.

Following my letter of 18th December, I am writing to you today with a further important update, as yesterday afternoon we were informed by the Department for Education (DfE) that there will be a change in arrangements for the return to school over the next few weeks. I apologise for the late notification of these changes. Once again, I am sharing this with you as quickly as I can.

In summary, as before:

- We already have an INSET day in place for all students on Monday 4th January. No students should attend school on this day and no children will receive online learning.
- Students in all years whose parents are critical workers or who are determined by the DfE as 'vulnerable' are to attend school as planned from Tuesday 5th January. Further details can be found below, and I include the government guidance on the classification of critical workers and vulnerable children with this letter.

However, there is now a change to the following arrangements:

- Year 11 students, whose parents are not critical workers and who are not determined by the DfE as 'vulnerable', will now access their normal lessons remotely via Microsoft Teams from Tuesday 5th until Friday 8th January. They are required to return to school in person on Monday 11th January.
- Year 7-10 students, whose parents are not critical workers and who are not determined by the DfE as 'vulnerable', will now access their normal lessons remotely via Microsoft Teams from Tuesday 5th until Friday 15th January. They are required to return to school in person on Monday 18th January.

The DfE has explained that the purpose of these changes is for two reasons. Firstly, the move to remote learning for many will create a longer gap of time between young people mixing at Christmas and returning to school, thus reducing the possible spread of COVID-19. Secondly, it will give school leaders time to set up a new national programme of mass COVID-19 testing in schools. This programme is being designed to identify those with the virus but without symptoms so that they can self-isolate, thereby minimising disruption.

Principal - Rob Forder

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Onsite Provision for Children of Critical Workers and Vulnerable Children

If either parent is classified as a critical worker as outlined in the DfE criteria provided with this letter, we strongly encourage you to send your children to school from Tuesday 5th January at their usual bubble start time. I would be extremely grateful if parents who are critical workers could complete the following survey by 12 noon on Monday 4th January to allow us to plan for your child's return:

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/8XLCHLY>

If your child is determined as 'vulnerable', we will contact you on or before Monday 4th January to invite your child to school from Tuesday 5th January at their normal bubble start time. Please note that 'vulnerable' children include those who do not have an IT device or access to the internet at home.

Please note that all eligible children attending school from Tuesday 5th January should do so in full uniform. All aspects of our COVID-secure arrangements will be in place, and students will attend their timetabled lessons with their normal teachers. A full canteen service will be provided, including breakfast club.

Remote Home Learning

Teachers at the Academy have been working hard to plan their timetabled lessons remotely from Tuesday 5th January, via Microsoft Teams. We expect that all children not attending school will attend these lessons on a suitable device at home. Failure to do so will result in children missing important new learning. Please note that because of our use of Microsoft Teams, we will not be providing students with work packs.

We have produced comprehensive guidance for parents and children accessing remote learning via Microsoft Teams. You can find this on our Academy website, using the following link:

<https://www.oasisacademylordshill.org/learning/home-learning>

All students have had comprehensive training in the use of Microsoft Teams. On Monday 4th January, their teachers will invite them to their lessons for the remainder of the week so they will know which lessons to attend and at which times. Online lessons will start from 8.30am (Year 7) or 9.00am (Years 8-11) on Tuesday 5th January. Over the coming days, we will also provide you with a copy of your child's timetable.

If you have any concerns about accessing remote learning via Microsoft Teams, please do not hesitate to contact us by email, using info@oasislordshill.org.

Reporting Cases of COVID-19

I am aware that infection rates of COVID-19 have increased both nationally and locally over the Christmas break. If your child has received a positive test result since Thursday 17th December, please make sure you have informed us by emailing COVIDtest@oasislordshill.org.

In your email, you should include your child's name, the date of their positive test and a contact telephone number. Thank you.

Free School Meals

I am pleased to inform you that we will be continuing to provide all families eligible for free school meals with a £10 food voucher for the week beginning Monday 4th January, as a continuation of the scheme implemented over the Christmas break. This voucher should be redeemed using the eCode provided in an email received by Edenred. We will process vouchers as soon as possible on Monday 4th January.

If you need support accessing your voucher, please email Ms Farrell by email, using denise.farrell@oasislordshill.org.

I will confirm arrangements for the distribution of free school meals to families of Year 7-10 students during the following week of 11th January in due course.

COVID-19 Testing Within School

Finally, we are currently developing our plans for delivering the new national COVID-19 testing programme for both students and staff in school. It is of the utmost importance that we plan carefully and then assess how best we can deliver this testing at the Academy. To do this, we will take the next fortnight to ensure everything is in place, and that we have received consent for your child to be tested.

We will write to you again next week when we know more about our local arrangements, including detail about the testing process, and how we will gather consent for your child to be tested. We will also explain arrangements for those who do not consent to the testing.

In the meantime, we look forward to seeing all eligible students at the Academy on Tuesday 5th January, and all other students online.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely



Mr Rob Forder
Principal

Government guidance : Critical workers and vulnerable children who can access schools or educational settings - 3rd December 2020

Government guidance on who are critical workers, and which children are deemed vulnerable is provided below, and also on the government's website.

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

Vulnerable children and young people include those who:

- 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
 - adopted children, 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)
 - others at the provider and local authority's discretion

Critical workers

Parents whose work is critical to the coronavirus (COVID-19) response include those who work in health and social care and in other key sectors outlined in the following sections.

Health and social care

This includes, but is not limited to, doctors, nurses, midwives, paramedics, social workers, care workers, and other frontline health and social care staff including volunteers; the support and specialist staff required to maintain the UK's health and social care sector; those working as part of the health and social care supply chain, including producers and distributors of medicines and medical and personal protective equipment.

Education and childcare

- childcare
- support and teaching staff
- social workers
- specialist education professionals who must remain active during the coronavirus (COVID-19) response to deliver this approach

Key public services

- those essential to the running of the justice system
- religious staff
- charities and workers delivering key frontline services
- those responsible for the management of the deceased
- journalists and broadcasters who are providing public service broadcasting

Local and national government

- those administrative occupations essential to the effective delivery of the coronavirus (COVID-19) response
- or delivering essential public services, such as the payment of benefits, including in government agencies and arms length bodies

Food and other necessary goods, those involved in food

- production
- processing
- distribution
- sale and delivery
- as well as those essential to the provision of other key goods (for example hygienic and veterinary medicines)

Public safety and national security, including:

- police and support staff
- Ministry of Defence civilians
- contractor and armed forces personnel (those critical to the delivery of key defence and national security outputs and essential to the response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak)

- fire and rescue service employees (including support staff)
- National Crime Agency staff
- those maintaining border security, prison and probation staff and other national security roles, including those overseas

Transport

This includes those who will keep the air, water, road and rail passenger and freight transport modes operating during the coronavirus (COVID-19) response, including those working on transport systems through which supply chains pass.

Utilities, communication and financial services

- staff needed for essential financial services provision (including but not limited to workers in banks, building societies and financial market infrastructure)
- the oil, gas, electricity and water sectors (including sewerage)
- information technology and data infrastructure sector and primary industry supplies to continue during the coronavirus (COVID-19) response
- key staff working in the civil nuclear, chemicals, telecommunications (including but not limited to network operations, field engineering, call centre staff, IT and data infrastructure, 999 and 111 critical services)
- postal services and delivery
- payments providers
- waste disposal sectors