

Our Ref: PRC/JUE

31 December 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

**IMPORTANT UPDATE 30 DECEMBER 2020 - JANUARY 2021 RETURN TO SCHOOL**

I hope you have still had the chance to enjoy the festive period and your families are safe and well.

No doubt you will have seen by now that the North East has been placed in Tier 4 and as national advice is fast changing, advice to schools is too. Specifically, latest guidance to schools, which we would really appreciate your support on next term states:

*All children and young people should continue to comply with the rules set out for the tier they are in, and parents are asked to help ensure their children are following those rules. That particularly includes those related to mixing with other households when they are not at school and when they are travelling to and from educational settings.*

Thankfully, the latest available data shows Newcastle rates are currently lower compared to other areas of the North East and with the approval of a second vaccine rollout yesterday, we hold on to hope that Spring could be a turning point.

Following the latest announcement by the DfE on 30th December 2020, relating to the resumption of school after the Christmas break, the return dates for students next term has now been revised as follows:

**Week Beginning Monday 4th January 2021**

This will now be a remote learning week. No students will be in school except for vulnerable/key worker students by prior arrangement only (see further details below).

**Week Beginning Monday 11th January 2021-Timetabled Week B**

Only Year 11 and Year 13 students will be in school – students enter through their usual year group entrance at the normal times i.e. Year 11 (8:30am) and Year 13 (ready for first timetabled lesson).

Vulnerable and key worker provision will continue by prior arrangement (see below).

**Week Beginning Monday 18th January 2021-Timetabled Week A**

All remaining year groups return - Years 9, 10 and 12. Students enter through their usual year group entrance at the normal times i.e Year 9 (8:40am), Year 10 (8:50am), Year 12 (ready for first timetabled lesson).

**Preit Chahal** Principal

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## **Key worker/Vulnerable provision-w/b 4<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> January 2021**

In line with DfE guidance, vulnerable students and students of key workers will be able to return to school from Monday 4 January at 8.45am in all year groups. Students attending this provision should arrive for school at 8.45am from Monday 4 January via their normal year group entrance in full school uniform and with their planners. School will finish at the normal times of 3:30pm on Monday and Thursday; and 2:40pm on Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday.

I ask that, unless you have no other alternative, all students work from home where it is safe to do so. I trust that you will understand the reason I make the request: I believe the real benefit of the staggered start is to significantly reduce the risk of students who may still be developing Covid symptoms after Christmas, spreading the virus to other students. Of course, we will be making welfare checks and encouraging certain students to come in to access this provision for those who we know require additional support.

Please email [joy.davison@ga.newcastle.sch.uk](mailto:joy.davison@ga.newcastle.sch.uk) before Monday 4th January if your child is eligible for this provision and you would like them to attend. Please include their name and year group in your email. This provision will be supervised independent study from remote learning work set on Frog and no specialist teaching will be available.

## **Remote Learning Provision**

The Government have asked schools to prioritise exam year groups for remote learning in the week beginning 4<sup>th</sup> January. However, where resources permit, we do hope to provide remote education for other year groups from 4<sup>th</sup> January too.

We advise students to get into good study habits and follow their exact timetable, working on subjects they would have had that day. This might be slightly trickier on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> January as staff will be setting work for all their classes so we appreciate your patience on this day.

For Year 13 students, we anticipate providing *some* live lessons during their timetabled slots in the week beginning 4<sup>th</sup> January, so students in this year group should keep an eye on Frog and their school email for Teams invites. Please be aware, remote learning tasks set on Frog will continue to be the primary focus of remote learning but live lessons, where appropriate, may complement these core tasks for this year group.

Students are strongly encouraged to contact staff if they have any issues with the work set or revision undertaken in preparation for mock exams. Staff will endeavour to get back to them as soon as possible.

## **Students eligible for free school meals**

As usual, free school meals can be collected from school for any eligible students at 12:25pm.

## **Year 11 Mock Exams**

Clearly the mock week planned for 4<sup>th</sup> January will be postponed until the following week once students have returned to school and mass testing of the whole year group has been completed. Students can continue to revise for these exams; as soon as mass testing arrangements have been finalised we will be able to re-issue exam timetables with exact dates.

## **Year 12/13 External Exams**

The Government have confirmed these will go ahead. Unfortunately, as students are no longer in school in the week commencing the 4<sup>th</sup> Jan, arrangements made in the last week before Christmas have again have to be revised. ***For students doing Y12/13 external exams live online lessons will now take place in the normal timetabled lesson slots in the week commencing 4<sup>th</sup> Jan. This will ensure students are fully supported in their revision.*** Students will be also contacted by class teachers or course leaders regarding

any additional longer booster session prior to the exam – if these are necessary they may also be delivered remotely.

Y12/Y13 students taking subjects (BTEC IT, OCR Camb Tech Sport, BTEC Health & Social Care, BTEC Childcare, OCR Camb Tech Business, BTEC Travel, L3 Ext Certificate Applied Science) with external January exams who think they will struggle to access live Teams lessons due to issues with ICT hardware or wifi should contact their **class teacher**. We will work with such students to provide ICT support.

### **Friday 8<sup>th</sup> January**

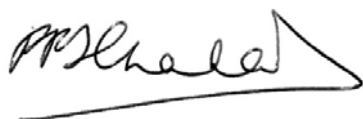
Please note that Friday 8 January currently remains a staff training day and there will be no students in school on this day and no vulnerable/key worker provision will be available for students.

For reference, all parents have access to Frog Parent and we would encourage the use of this to help support and encourage students working remotely. This displays the assignments that have been set and the progress that students have made in completing these tasks.

More information regarding the mass testing programme in schools will be released in due course.

Once again, we would like to apologise for yet more changes to the start of term. You may think we get advanced notice of these announcements but sadly not; our response to you is in real time.

May I take this opportunity to wish you and your families all the very best for 2021.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Preit Chahal', with a long horizontal line underneath it.

Preit Chahal

Principal