

31 December 2020

Dear Parents/Carers:

We hope that, despite the restrictions in place, you have had a good Christmas.

As you will, no doubt, have heard, following the announcements by the Education Secretary and the Prime Minister yesterday, the situation regarding the return to school has changed again. The testing programme will continue, as planned, but most students will have a later return to school than previously indicated. This is as a result of the rise in COVID-19 cases and the high incidence amongst the secondary school age range. We are told that there will be a further review in two weeks' time. In summary, the arrangements are as follows:

As previously communicated, Monday 4 January will be an extra designated training day (consistent with Government guidance). No students will be in school on this day, which will be used to ensure that the testing arrangements (including training) are in place and staff are well positioned for the combination of on-site and remote learning that will be needed.

From Tuesday 5 January onwards, some students will attend school (on site). These are students who are the children of key workers, together with those who meet certain criteria of vulnerability. As indicated in the previous letter, places will need to be booked in advance for these students, so that we can make appropriate arrangements with regard to staffing and accommodation. If you require a place and have not booked one already, please contact the school office on Monday 4th January and we will do our best to accommodate your child. These students will enter and exit via the main school entrance and their school day will run from 8.40 am until 2.45 pm.

From Tuesday 5 January to Friday 8 January, all students will be working from home, following an online programme. For Year 11 and Year 13, this will be a full programme of live lessons delivered through MS Teams. For other year groups, there will be a combination of approaches employed, with some lessons pre-recorded.

Please do all that you can to ensure that your son/daughter follows the programme, using SMHW and MS Teams, as required. It is, of course, vitally important that they do not 'fall behind'. We are determined to do all that we can to ensure that every Chase Terrace Academy student can make strong progress with their learning and create ambitious opportunities for their future and we need to work together to achieve this. Please contact the relevant year office if remote learning creates any specific difficulties for your son/daughter and we will do what we can to help.

From Monday 11 January, students in years 11 and 13 will attend lessons or assessments on site, while students in other year groups (other than the key worker/vulnerable group) will continue to work at home and access a full programme of online lessons. Year 11 students will attend from 8.30 am until 2.55 pm and will take their break and lunch periods at different times to the students in the key worker group. Year 13 will follow their mock exam timetable in this week.

As the return to school for examination year groups has been delayed until 11 January, year 13 mock examinations have had to be rescheduled and these will now start on Monday 11 January. A separate letter can be found in the sixth form area of the school website, explaining these arrangements in detail. This letter also outlines arrangements for externally set BTEC assessments, which are unchanged. Prior to this, as indicated above, year 13 students will have online timetabled lessons from Tuesday 5 January to Friday 8 January.

Currently, the Government then intends that all students will be back in school from Monday 18 January. Although this is a firm intention, it will obviously be subject to review, based on the rates of transmission and national/local capacity to cope.

Please also note that, throughout this period, school transport will be provided for students who would usually need it.

There is a separate letter on the school website, explaining the arrangements for testing. Please read this carefully and look out for a further message early next week regarding booking the lateral flow tests. Despite the shortcomings in the way that the Government has managed and resourced the testing, we are confident that we will be able to put a programme of testing in place from next week. We are hugely grateful for the flexibility and professionalism of our staff and also for the generous offers of help from parents and other members of the community, which have really helped us to staff the programme.

Please do look after yourselves - Happy New Year.

Stuart Jones
Executive Headteacher

Nicola Mason
Head of School