

Dear Parent/Carers

START OF TERM JANUARY 2021

You will have seen in the press confirmation that further changes have been made to the start of term and expectations on schools in the light of the rapid increase of CPOVID-19 cases nationally. We are following the direction of the government – as detailed below.

Monday 4th January remains a Staff Training Day and students are **not** expected to engage with remote learning.

From 5th January 2021 our academies will be open only to children who are vulnerable or are children of Key Workers. We have been collating details from families who intend to make use of this facility. Group sizes will be no more than 15 to enhance social distancing and students will be accessing study support and catch-up learning. Students who attend school site during this week will not be required to wear uniform. All students are welcome to access this online subject based learning should you wish to do so. This will be available through Teams.

From 5th January to 8th January 2021 we will require **Y11 groups to attend live learning lessons as per their timetable**, remaining off site to do so. This will be in line with our Remote Learning Policy. We expect the majority of lessons to be delivered live via Teams. Where teachers also blend learning to provide time on task or use of resources from elsewhere, staff will remain available for the duration of the lesson to answer queries from students. We will monitor attendance of students to sessions and remind parents that engagement with remote learning is compulsory. Where families have IT access issues work will be provided on paper and House Leaders will contact families to make arrangements. If your circumstances have changed and your child no longer has access to IT facilities please contact the Academy using the following email address – NEW [Covid19@newcastle.academy](mailto:NEW Covid19@newcastle.academy)

From 11th January 2021 **mandatory Remote Learning for all other year groups will commence** and Mass Testing of staff and Y11 students will begin to take place. We are still awaiting full guidance from DfE and NHS, but as soon as plans are firmer, we will communicate these out to you. We hope as many parents and students as possible will consent to testing but it is not compulsory. Please make sure that you respond to a message containing the consent forms we are going to email/share with you from 4th January 2021. During this week arrangements for remote learning will need to continue to support students with full access to the timetabled lessons whilst managing testing and the resumption of face-to-face teaching of Y11. During this week a phased return of Y11 is likely along with a phased return to site of staff.

From 18th January 2021 it is expected that all other year groups will be tested and returned to site details to follow.

Vocational examinations scheduled for January will still take place. Staff delivering these courses will be in contact with their students to provide details of arrangements for this.

Students who are classed as Clinically Extremely Vulnerable will continue to work from home and parents will be contacted by pastoral staff.

In the longer term we anticipate being asked to maintain Serial Testing for any student or staff member identified as having been in close contact with a confirmed case. Serial Testing involves testing daily for 7 days (weekends excluded) and allows staff and students to stay in school as long as they test negative. Again, this is not compulsory, and any person identified as a close contact who does not participate in serial testing will be required to self-isolate for 10 days.

These are extremely challenging and swiftly changing times. From today Staffordshire, and the counties around us, are subject to Tier 4 restrictions. We continue to monitor closely government and sector advice in relation to school opening and remote learning and to ensure that we operate as safely as we can. WE will continue to up-date you with relevant information as we have it.

We will also be in contact with parents of students who receive free school meals to make arrangements for access to these meals.

We are extremely grateful for your collective effort and good will in supporting such unprecedented requirements. You have our sincere thanks.