



18th December 2020

Plans for January 2021

Dear Parents/Carers

I very much hoped that my recent letter and newsletter would be the last communication from the school before Christmas. But alas, following Government guidelines published at 6.00 pm on the 17th December 2020, I need to communicate further plans for January 2021.

In my letter on the 17th December 2020, I discussed the plans for schools to undertake COVID-19 testing in January 2021.

The Department for Education's aim is, "To support public health efforts during the return to school in January 2021, by offering secondary schools in England access to additional coronavirus (COVID-19) testing from the first week of January. This will help deliver the national priority of keeping as many students and teachers as possible in school beyond the start of term, minimising the spread of the virus and the disruption caused by coronavirus (COVID-19) cases arising in education settings."

In order to facilitate this testing and prepare for the roll-out, the Government has advised schools to make adjustments for the first week back after Christmas. This will allow all schools to plan and implement an onsite testing facility for students and staff. In the setting up of this facility, I should note that there is still a considerable amount of detail from the Government in regard to the logistics of how this will work in practise, that are unknown by schools at this point.

However, I can confirm:

- Monday 4th January 2021 will be become an INSET day for all students, in which students do not need to attend. Should this pose a problem for any family, please get in touch with your Director of Learning and we will be able to accommodate your child in school
- From Tuesday 5th January 2021 to Friday 8th January 2021 inclusive, students in Year 11 will be expected to attend school as usual. Students in Years 7, 8, 9, and 10 will undertake virtual lessons via Microsoft Teams and should not attend school. These students will follow their regular school timetables. Students identified as vulnerable, and children of critical workers can attend school from Tuesday 5th January 2021. Staff from the school will be in touch with families as appropriate. Please do contact covid@goffschurchgate.herts.sch.uk if you are a critical worker and you require your child to attend school from 5th January 2021



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- The Government's plan is that students and staff in the school, who are returning on the 5th January 2021, will be offered lateral flow COVID-19 tests in school. These are rapid tests which produce a test result in 30 minutes. Whilst these are not mandatory, we strongly encourage students to take these tests. Further details regarding consent to take these tests will be issued in January 2021
- Students in Years 7, 8, 9, and 10 will return to school on Monday 11th January 2021, but will not have to take a test to return on that day
- Once the full testing facility is up and running, it will provide a rapid onsite facility, which should reduce the number of students who need to isolate due to being a close contact as they can have regular testing at school. It will also allow the Government to identify asymptomatic cases and reduce the spread of the disease
- The programme will enable as many staff and students as possible to get tested from the first week of term, the week commencing 4th January 2021. This will be done with lateral flow device tests. If the student's first test is positive, they should immediately self-isolate and have this positive test confirmed with a standard Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) test (they take more time because they are usually processed in a laboratory). If the student's first test is negative, they should be tested again three days later. If this test is positive, they should self-isolate and confirm this with a PCR test
- Further details of the testing programme will be sent to parents in January 2021
- All students should continue to comply with the rules set out for the Tier we are in, and parents are asked to help ensure their children are following these 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
- When students are studying at home via Microsoft Teams, the school will provide Food Parcels for students who have Free School Meals in the school. These will be delivered in the early part of the week. Should you require a food parcel, please email covid@goffschurchgate.herts.sch.uk asap and by Saturday 2nd January 2021 at the latest
- For students in Years 7, 8, 9 and 10, if you have any ICT issues, which will limit your child's ability to access live lessons at home, please contact Ms Goodchild at c.goodchild@goffschurchgate.herts.sch.uk

Once again, I apologise that you are receiving this information so late in the day. However, as you will have seen through the media, this announcement was only made yesterday.



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I thank you for your ongoing support and should you have any concerns or queries please get in touch with the Senior Team, email addresses are below.

Yours sincerely

Thomas Sparks
Principal

Key Email Addresses

Critical Worker requiring provision from 5 th January 2021	covid@goffschurchgate.herts.sch.uk
Register for a Food Parcel	covid@goffschurchgate.herts.sch.uk
Access to ICT issues	c.goodchild@goffschurchgate.herts.sch.uk
Year 7	s.robson@goffschurchgate.herts.sch.uk
Year 8	s.baker@goffschurchgate.herts.sch.uk s.renew@goffschurchgate.herts.sch.uk
Year 9	l.johnson@goffschurchgate.herts.sch.uk
Years 10 and 11	c.goodchild@goffschurchgate.herts.sch.uk
SEND	d.emmott@goffschurchgate.herts.sch.uk
Reporting a positive Covid case over Christmas	admin@goffschurchgate.herts.sch.uk
Principal	t.sparks@goffschurchgate.herts.sch.uk

Please note – due to Christmas break, you may not get an immediate response



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