



31st December 2020

Spring Term Return to School – Amended Plans Following Updated Government Guidance

Dear Parent/Carer,

I hope all families have enjoyed a well-earned rest over the Christmas period and are looking forward to a more positive new year ahead.

I'm sure you will have seen various news reports during the past twenty-four hours announcing the Government's change in plans for the return of pupils to secondary schools as a consequence of rising rates of COVID 19 nationally and the emergence of a new and more easily transmissible variant.

In line with the Government guidance issued to schools late yesterday - and updated this morning - we shall provide **remote education for all of our year groups from Monday 4th January**. As a consequence, **school will be closed to all pupils apart from children categorised as vulnerable or the children of critical workers** – see the link below for the government's definition of these terms:

[Critical workers and vulnerable children who can access schools or educational settings - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/critical-workers-and-vulnerable-children)

While all of our school transport routes (buses, taxis, etc) are expected to continue to operate, so there should be no barriers to attendance, parents/carers of children eligible to attend school during this period must decide whether this is right for their child given that this extended school closure has been put in place to limit virus transmission (particularly the new and more highly transmissible COVID variant) amongst secondary school-age children. Pupils attending school must wear full school uniform and – unless eligible for free schools meals – should bring a packed lunch on Monday 4th January. Once we know the likely numbers of children attending, school meals will be available from Tuesday 5th January.

In line with the Government's new guidance, we are currently planning the return of our pupils to school in line with the graphic below, with **Years 11 and 13 returning to school on Monday 11th January and Years 7-10 and Year 12 returning on Monday 18th January**.

Department for Education			
Return dates for primary and secondary schools and colleges in England			
Year group	w/c 4 Jan	w/c 11 Jan	w/c 18 Jan
Exam years (years 11 and 13)	Prioritise remote education	Return to school	Continue at school
Primary (years 1-6)	Return to school with some local exceptions*	Continue at school with some local exceptions*	Continue at school with some local exceptions*
Secondary / college (years 7-10 and 12)	Prioritise remote education	Prioritise remote education	Full return to school with some local exceptions*



On Monday 4th January all lessons for the day – for all of our year groups – will be provided through *Show My Homework*. Pupils should log-in to the platform in the usual way to access the activities and tasks set by their class teachers. From Monday onwards, pupils should start to receive e-mails (to their school e-mail address) and invitations from their teachers to access Microsoft Teams live lessons, which will start from Tuesday 5th January. These will take place at the times when their normal timetabled lessons would have taken place in school.

For pupils in Years 11 and 13, we intend to deliver all lessons from Tuesday 5th January through Microsoft Teams and these may be supplemented by additional resources on *Show My Homework* if required. These lessons will probably not take place for the full timetabled hour (or two hours if it is a double-lesson) and may just be 25-30 minutes setting-up the learning for the students from which point they then work independently. We have found this approach to work well with our students and we do not feel it is desirable for students to have to spend five full hours staring at a screen each day.

From Tuesday 5th January, all lessons for Years 7-10 and Year 12 will be delivered through *Show My Homework*, MS Teams, or a combination of the two. However, pupils should expect that generally one out of every two lessons for each subject will be live lessons delivered through MS Teams.

Over the first week of term Base Tutors will be phoning home to all of the members of their Base Groups to check they are ok. Christmas can be a stressful time for all families - even outside of a global pandemic - and we need to check that our pupils are safe, healthy, happy and able to access the remote learning. We hope parents see this as a supportive and positive contact from the school.

All external examinations for our students will continue as planned. On Friday 8th January, Year 10 BTEC Travel & Tourism students must be in school by 8:45am for their morning exam. These students can remain in school for the rest of the day following their exams, or parents/carers can arrange to collect them and take them home once the examination is completed.

From Monday 11th January onwards, all Year 13 mock exams and Year 11 Art mock exams will still run as scheduled and students should revise and prepare for these in the usual way. These exams may have even greater significance if there are any future changes to external examinations in the Summer, so students should not underestimate their importance.

On Friday 15th January, the Year 13 BTEC Computing exam will still run as scheduled.

Parents/carers may be aware of the Government's aspiration for all three and a half thousand English secondary schools to set up their own COVID testing sites over the next week to enable them to test as many staff and pupils as possible in order to prevent pupils being sent home to self-isolate if they have been a close contact of a confirmed COVID case. The intention is that testing (using rapid Lateral Flow Tests) should begin as soon as possible in the new school year, with those who are in examination years being prioritised for testing.

As you will appreciate this is a huge logistical undertaking, and beyond anything which schools have ever been required to do previously. The government envisages that most of the personnel for these sites will be volunteers, so I should be extremely grateful to hear from any parents or family contacts who may be able to assist with this (particularly trained current or former NHS staff, or individuals who have received relevant medical or First Aid training from St John's Ambulance, the military, etc.).

Please feel free to get in touch through the school's enquiries e-mail address (enquiries@swracademy.org) if you would like to offer your assistance or to find out further details.

Thank you for your continuing support of the school as we try to make sure all of our pupils can return to face-to-face learning in the safest possible manner.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Guest', with a large, stylized flourish or scribble to the right of the name.

Mark Guest
Headteacher