



THE BISHOP OF HEREFORD'S BLUECOAT SCHOOL

Hampton Dene Road, Tupsley, Hereford HR1 1UU

Tel: 01432 347500

Enquiries: head@bhbs.hereford.sch.uk

Headteacher: Mr Martin Henton

MNH/AHW

31st December 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

I hope you have been able to enjoy a restful and festive Christmas break.

Following the worrying increase in COVID cases across the country, yesterday, the Government announced altered plans for the return of students to school at the beginning of the spring term.

I am writing to you, to confirm that as a consequence of the Government announcement, only students who are vulnerable or from households where parents are both critical workers will be able to attend school from Monday 4th January (I have listed the DFE vulnerable categories at the end of this letter). This should include all students with an EHCP. They will be supervised in year group bubbles and will follow the same online learning as their peers. Students should bring a packed lunch, snacks and a drink with them.

Critical workers are those whose response is critical to the COVID19 response and can be found on the DFE website. It is expected that the majority of secondary school students are old enough to be at home and will not therefore need this provision. Given the rising rates of infection, especially in the new variant of COVID, can I please urge you only to use this provision if absolutely necessary.

I ask you to please be vigilant of the COVID guidance, it is essential that if your child develops symptoms of COVID-19, they must not come back to school and you should arrange a test for them which can be done through <https://www.nhs.uk/ask-for-a-coronavirus-test> or by calling 119. When students start to return to school, please follow our normal absence procedures and inform school once you have a test result.

If anyone in your household has a COVID test, then your son/daughter should remain in isolation until the test result is received. Please do not send students into school whilst you are awaiting test results.

Further information is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>

The guidance schools have received links the later return of students with the mass testing programme. We are still awaiting more detailed guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) about this. However, we fully support the strategy of enabling as many students to be in school as possible. Parent consent is required for the mass testing on

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return to school. Please use the parent app to tick whether you provide consent for this before students return to school. This will be critical to keeping students in school. Without consent for COVID testing, in the event of a positive test in the school community, students who are identified as close contacts will need to self-isolate for the full ten days from the point of contact. In the event of a positive bilateral flow device test taken in school, students will then immediately be required to self-isolate and have the test confirmed with a PCR test. I will confirm further detail about the testing next week when I have more details from the Department for Education.

Yesterday, the Government announced new return to school dates:

Year 11 will return on Monday 11th January.

Years 7,8, 9 and 10 will return on Monday 18th January.

If there are any further changes to these dates from the Government, I will write again to update you.

From Monday 4th January, learning will be provided virtually via Microsoft teams for all students (which is accessible on a phone and not just a computer). Form times will also be provided on Teams, so that daily contact with tutors can be continued. Lessons will be at the same time as those on the students' timetable. In the event of staff absence, you will be notified that this lesson is not able to take place as soon as we can do so. Students with SEND, who receive support during lessons will continue to do so remotely from support staff in their Microsoft Teams chat facility. Interventions will continue to run in their usual timetabled time

To access virtual learning students should log into Microsoft teams at the time of their lesson. Students were issued with timetables again at the end of term, but this can also be found on the student app from Monday with updated classes due to some staffing changes. For help on this and a guide please visit:

<http://www.bhbs.hereford.sch.uk/page/?title=Teams&pid=115>

If you require the essential critical worker or vulnerable student provision, please confirm your place is needed using this link:

<https://go.bhbs.hereford.sch.uk/KWPB>

If you need to withdraw your confirmation, please contact Mrs Bunston directly by email; EBunston@bhbs.hereford.sch.uk

Virtual learning will include guidance and support from subject teachers plus time for activities and tasks to be completed. If siblings do not all have access to Microsoft teams for live learning all materials will also be posted on the student app via SIMS (called homework but is the work for home). This is the same as the work being talked through by the teacher in case you are not able to access it at the exact lesson time for any reason.

I very much look forward to welcoming students back to school as soon as we are able to do so.

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Kind regards



Martin Henton
Headteacher

Identification of vulnerable children and young people

Vulnerable children and young people for the purposes of continued attendance during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak are those across all year groups who:

- are assessed as being in need under section 17 of the Children Act 1989, including children and young people who have a child in need plan, a child protection plan or who are a looked-after child
- have an education, health and care (EHC) plan and it is determined, following risk assessment, that their needs can be as safely or more safely met in the educational environment
- have been assessed as otherwise vulnerable by educational providers or local authorities (including children's social care services), and who could therefore benefit from continued attendance. This might include children and young people on the edge of receiving support from children's social care services, adopted children, those at risk of becoming NEET ('not in employment, education or training'), those living in temporary accommodation, those who are young carers and others at the provider and local authority's discretion.

The term 'all year groups' in this context for attendance purposes refers to children under 5 eligible for early years' entitlements and children and young people aged 5 to 18 (or aged 5 to 25 for children and young people with an EHC plan).