



18<sup>th</sup> December 2020

Dear Parents, Carers and Students

I write following the recent and unexpected announcement to all schools from the Department for Education, outlining arrangements for returning to school in January 2021. Schools and colleges are being asked to implement a phased start to the spring term, and being invited to set up a mass Covid testing programme for students and staff. I am writing to you today to explain how we intend to respond to these extremely last-minute Government requests.

Yesterday afternoon, following our closure for the Christmas holidays, the Government sent the following directives to all schools nationally:

- Yr. 11 and 13 students can attend school to be taught the week commencing Monday 4<sup>th</sup> January
- The full return of all other students must only begin on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> January
- Children of Key Workers, vulnerable students may attend school the week commencing Monday 4<sup>th</sup> January
- Remote learning must be offered to all other students up until Friday 8<sup>th</sup> January
- Schools should prepare for the 'mass testing' programme with further details to follow
- Schools can take an *additional* INSET day to prepare for these arrangements which will be clarified over the Christmas holidays

In response to these directives, St Nicholas Catholic High School will be implementing the following arrangements:

**Monday 4<sup>th</sup> January - Planned INSET Day**

- School will be closed to all students for planned staff training.

**Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> January - Additional INSET Day from DfE**

- School will only be open to Year 13 students for Mock Examinations in the Sports Hall.
- School will be closed to all other students.
- This will allow St Nicholas staff to respond to as of yet unseen guidance for the year ahead.



**Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> January – Friday 8<sup>th</sup> January**

<b>Year 13</b>	<b>Attend school as usual - Mock Examinations to continue</b> School Transport and Dining Room provision will be available as usual
<b>Year 11</b>	<b>Attend school as usual - lessons will follow scheduled timetable</b> School Transport and Dining Room provision will be available as usual
<b>Years 7-10</b>	<b>Students should access Microsoft Teams to engage with their remote learning</b> Further details regarding our remote learning provision and ‘how to’ guides can be accessed here. <a href="https://st-nicholas.cheshire.sch.uk/remote-learning/">https://st-nicholas.cheshire.sch.uk/remote-learning/</a>
<b>Year 12</b>	<b>Students should access Microsoft Teams to engage with their remote learning</b> Year 12 Examinations will now begin w/c 11 <sup>th</sup> January
<b>Key Workers &amp; Vulnerable Students</b>	Please complete the online questionnaire via the link below should you wish your child(ren) to access on site provision by 12 noon on Saturday 2 <sup>nd</sup> January. <a href="https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=TQCEKBxgKE67QeEw_TRIHkiCfEh4dFnx5P6N0txBZUOExZQ1g2Sk3WU4SEFQTDJUTzNJRE5LUIQIQCN0PWcu">https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=TQCEKBxgKE67QeEw_TRIHkiCfEh4dFnx5P6N0txBZUOExZQ1g2Sk3WU4SEFQTDJUTzNJRE5LUIQIQCN0PWcu</a>

Please note that vouchers will be posted home to eligible families in lieu of Free School Meals not being taken in school during the week.

**Monday 11 January**

- All students to return to school as normal

**Mass testing programme**

We are positive about the potential for the mass testing of students and staff in schools, as a way of reducing the spread of the virus and enabling fewer students and staff to have to self-isolate. You can read more about how the Government expects this programme to work [here](#).

Setting up this programme in schools is an incredibly complex operation. We have been sent some information about how it should work already, but more detailed guidance is expected to be produced by the Government over the Christmas holiday period.

We will not, therefore, be in position to have this programme up and running as soon as the spring term starts. At the start of term, we will review what the expectations are, what support is available from the Government or other agencies, and what we can realistically deliver.



We will let you know more about our plans as soon as we can in January. In the meantime, from the start of next term, we will continue to implement the safety measures we have been using in the Advent term.

I can only apologise for any frustration that these arrangements may cause you and your families, particularly at this time of the year. The unexpected timing and contents of these recent announcements have caught us all very much by surprise and we are having to respond to a vast quantity of extremely last minute and complex Government guidance.

Full details of the guidance issued to schools can be found below should you wish to access this information:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/schools-and-childcare-settings-return-in-january-2021/schools-and-childcare-settings-return-in-january-2021>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-asymptomatic-testing-in-schools-and-colleges/coronavirus-covid-19-asymptomatic-testing-in-schools-and-colleges>

I will write to you again on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> January with further details regarding the school mass testing programme and other practical arrangements. Until then, thank you for your patience and ongoing support – once again I wish you all a happy, holy and peaceful Christmas.

Yours sincerely

**Richard Woods**  
Headteacher

IN OMNIBUS LABORA