

Email to all parents and carers - Friday 18th December 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

Re: Updated plans for the return to school in January 2021.

I want to update you on events that you have no doubt been following in the news over the last 24 hours, regarding the government's plans for COVID-19 testing in schools and the delayed start of the Spring term.

The government's plans are yet to fully emerge - we have been promised a full guidance manual for next week. In the meantime we have made the following decisions in response to the guidance issued so far:

far:

1. Monday 4th January will now be an inset day for staff only. The government have allowed schools to take an extra inset day, to plan for the testing regime that they have in mind. On this day, we will also be enabling self-administered testing for all school staff.
2. Years 11 and 13 will return to school on Tuesday 5th January and follow their normal timetable. Please don't forget that mock exams for Year 13 start on the 18th January.
3. Children of critical workers and children classed as vulnerable will also be allowed to attend school from the 5th January. Mr Smith will be in contact with you later today, regarding who is eligible to attend under this categorisation.
4. All other Year groups will remain at home, returning to school on Monday 11th January. During this time, our Remote Blended Learning protocol will be in place. All students will be expected to follow their normal timetable from home. They have been given the relevant codes to log into their Google Classrooms and teachers will be in school, leading blended learning. Many of these lessons will be 'live' lessons via the Google Meets app, which is accessible from each Google Classroom. All students have been minded of how to access their classrooms and the live platform in Form time today. This means that if a student has, for example Geography during period one - they will be expected to be in their Geography Google Classroom at that time and the teacher will be there, leading the lesson; some part of the lesson will be live, some time given for students to work on tasks, and some time for live interactions with the teacher.
5. We will be contacting parents later today, with information on how we are going to distribute laptops to those who need them.
6. We are still waiting for government guidance on how they expect schools to oversee the testing regime that they want in place. They have made it clear that they do not expect teachers or school staff to be conducting tests - and neither do I. We will not be turning CHS into

a testing centre - we neither have the space, staff, time nor money to do this and I am eagerly awaiting further guidance on how the government intend to support us in the task they have set. I fully support an expansion of testing as a means to help control the spread of the virus, but schools are simply not equipped to do this on their own. Our contingency plan at this stage, is to distribute testing kits to families and allow parents and carers to conduct tests on their own children, in their own homes. The government will be issuing training videos to help with this task.

We are still in discussions with other Headteachers, professional associations and the Local Authority on our approach to the government's plans. The timing of the announcements has not been helpful, hence the allocation of an extra inset day, to help with the planning.

I will keep you updated as and when we get more information - please keep a regular check on the school website. Please also note that the school office is closed during the Christmas period and will not reopen until Monday 4th January.

Mr Smith has already written to you, advising you on what you need to do if your child shows symptoms or tests positive for COVID-19 during the holiday period.

Thank you for your understanding and patience, it's not how we planned to end this term and certainly not how we planned to re-open in January.

On behalf of everyone at Christleton High School, I wish you a very happy Christmas.

Kind regards

D P Jones

Headteacher

Christleton High School

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