

1st January 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

Coronavirus Update 31

I hope that you and your family have been able to have a safe and enjoyable Christmas. As I have not heard of any new positive test results I am encouraged to think that the wider school community has been given some respite.

The holiday, however, has brought no escape from news about schools. You will most probably have heard about some of the changes now planned for the new term. Although they have had a lot of publicity, I am writing with a summary of them to make sure that everyone is in the picture.

Monday 4th January

This remains, as already announced, a day for staff training. The school is closed to all students and the Sixth Form Taster Day has been cancelled.

Tuesday 5th to Friday 8th January

The school is open to children of critical workers and students already identified as needing additional support. As the families concerned will know, we already have a register of the students involved. If there are any changes to that list please let us know in advance by emailing:

office@droitwichspahigh.worcs.sch.uk

For these two groups the situation will be very similar to the one during our first national lockdown. They will spend the school day in a computer room, following the same on-line teaching as their classmates at home. They will be supervised by a member of staff, but their regular subject teachers will not be involved as they will be working on-line.

They will be expected to follow what we have come to know as the normal patterns of safe behaviour. School transport will be running as normal; they should arrive in their school uniform and report to the Dining Room. On the Tuesday they should bring a packed lunch, but for all other days they will be able to order food in advance from the school kitchen.

The on-line day will end at 2.40, although the school transport will be running to its normal schedule. Students who are waiting for a bus will be able to remain in the Dining Room.

All other students should remain at home. This includes **Years 11 and 13**, who were expecting to attend school as normal at the time of my last letter to you.

We shall do our very best to provide lessons on-line in accordance with the normal timetable. The exception to this is Core PE lessons where some activities will be suggested but there will not be live lessons. Please encourage your son or daughter to see the Tuesday as the first day of the new term. It would also be helpful if you reminded them to be more than passive spectators of their lessons. The skill of pacing a lesson in the classroom does not transfer easily to teaching on-line. Teachers do value their

students' feedback, for example if the pace becomes too fast or too slow. We are anxious to make our use of this week as effective as possible, most of all for Years 11 and 13. They should be reminded that the Government has repeatedly assured us that GCSE and A Level exams will go ahead in the summer as planned.

Please note that the **Year 11** PPEs (mock exams) will now take place in the week beginning Monday 22nd February. The **Year 13** PPEs are scheduled for the week beginning Monday 8th March.

The on-line timetable will close at the end of Lesson 5. There will not be a live tutor time. Tutors, however, are available and they will respond to any requests for the information or support that would normally be available at that time.

Year 10 will remain in their sets from last term during the on-line teaching. The set changes which we announced will take effect once we return to face-to-face teaching.

Many students in **Year 8** have not previously experienced on-line lessons at the high school. During their ICT lessons, however, they have practised using Microsoft Teams and they know how to access their work on epraise. There is comprehensive guidance and explanation on the school website:

<https://website.droitwichspahigh.worcs.sch.uk/index.php/curriculum/remote-learning/>

Monday 11th to Friday 15th January

Children of critical workers and other students identified as requiring additional support should continue to attend.

Years 11 and 13 begin to attend normally and to follow their regular timetable. The school catering facilities will be open as usual. The **remainder of Years 8, 9, 10 and 12** continue to have their lessons on-line whilst they are at home.

Monday 18th January and onwards

The school becomes fully open; all students should attend as normal.

Covid-19 testing on site

The high school, like other secondaries across the country, is being required to set up its own centre for testing its students and its staff. We have still to get to grips with all the practicalities and other implications of running a testing centre. I hope to be able to tell you what we have in mind when I next write.

Meanwhile, my very good wishes for the year ahead,

Yours sincerely,



Natalie Waters