



30th December 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope that, amongst all the turmoil, you have been able to enjoy a very happy Christmas period.

In my last letter (on Wednesday 23rd December) I promised to send an update today on our plans for the return to school in January. My apologies for the lateness of this message, but as you know, recent days (including today) have seen some significant developments in the situation regarding Covid, not least the worrying spread of the new variant across the UK and the significant rise in positive cases.

The current situation in Portishead (and North Somerset in general) is currently, fortunately, considerably better than the national average, with the result that we will remain in Tier 3 of the national restrictions whilst many other areas will be placed in Tier 4 from tomorrow. However, this is little comfort given the national picture, and our thoughts go out to any families whose members have been affected.

The news of the approval of the Oxford Astra-Zeneca vaccine is a positive step, and will help speed up the vaccination programme, but it is clear that we will continue to face some significant disruption to our lives for some time to come. This includes schooling, and as such the Department for Education has, this afternoon, announced amended plans for the start of term in January. We are awaiting further detail, but our current understanding for secondary schools is as follows:

- In the week beginning **Monday 4th January** only the children of critical workers and those needing additional support (including those who would struggle to access remote learning) will attend school. This will now include any Year 11 and 13 students who fall into this category*.
- Students in Years 11 and 13 (apart from those above) will now 'learn from home' from Monday 4th January.
- The expectation on schools for other year-groups in the first week of term is currently unclear, but it is safest to assume that all year-groups will be 'learning from home' from Monday 4th January.
- Public examinations due to be taken in January will continue as planned.
- **From Monday 11th January** Year 11 and 13 will return to school, with other year-groups continuing to 'learn from home'. Year 11 mock exams will now start on Monday 11th January.
- **From Monday 18th January** all students are due to return to school.

* If you have not yet completed the survey (or are the parents of a child in Year 11 or 13 who fall into this category) and are requesting in-school supervision from Monday 4th January please do so as soon as possible, and ideally by 9am tomorrow:

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We will write again with further details tomorrow. We will share further information on the return to school, information on gaining consent for Covid testing and explain how anyone willing to offer support to the school in running this testing is able to do so (with thanks for the kind offers received to date).

We will also be setting up an opportunity for parents to seek any further clarification on arrangements for the new term via a parental 'Q&A' session on Zoom – details to follow.

It is going to be a long road ahead in the next couple of months, but in these lovely words...

" We have a long way
to go " sighed the boy.
" Yes but look how far
we have come " said the
horse.



from 'The Boy, The Mole, The Fox and The Horse' by Charlie Mackesy

With very best wishes

Tom Inman
Headteacher

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