

01/01/2021

Dear Parents, Carers and Sixth Form Students

Re: Arrangements for return to school - response required on behalf of every child.

Happy New Year! I hope that 2021 is a bright, happy and prosperous year for all our Holyrood families.

As promised, the purpose of this letter is to outline the plans to bring students back to Holyrood following the Christmas break, including some detail around how we will provide COVID-19 testing at Holyrood in the immediate future and in the longer term.

Return to School

From Tuesday 5th January until Friday 8th January, inclusive, only the children of Critical Workers and those who fall under the Government's 'vulnerable' definition are to attend school. If you are a critical worker, please only send your child into school if you have no other option. Although all staff will be in school, they will be engaged in teaching online or in conducting COVID testing. Children working on-site will work within their 'bubble' in a designated computer room so that they can complete their online learning. From Monday 11th January until Friday 15th January, inclusive, the children of Critical Workers and 'vulnerable' children can still attend school but they will be joined by examination year groups in that week.

Children attending school from Tuesday 5th January should wear uniform. Somerset County School Transport have not advised us of any changes to existing services and so school transport will be provided as normal from Tuesday 5th January.

You can find out if you are classed as a Critical Worker [Here](#)

You can find out if your child is classed as 'vulnerable' in my letter of 18th December [Here](#)

To tell us that you intend for your child to attend school from Tuesday 5th January because you are a critical worker, please book their place [by filling out this form.](#)

Year groups will return to school in a staggered fashion until we have the entire school back from Monday 18th January. While year groups are not at school, Holyrood will provide online learning for every child via Google Classroom in the same way as during the first lockdown. Lessons will be provided as per the students' timetables and teachers will be present live for students to ask any questions.

If your child has any computer, internet or password-related issues, they or you should contact hictsupport@educ.somerset.gov.uk

I recognise that Year 7 students and their parents will be new to Remote Learning at Holyrood and as such, you can find out more about it here:

[Remote Learning Guide](#)

When will your child return to school?

- Year 7 will return to school on Monday 18th January, with online learning provided from Tuesday 5th January to Friday 15th January, inclusive.
- Year 8 will return to school on Monday 18th January, with online learning provided from Tuesday 5th January to Friday 15th January, inclusive.
- Year 9 will return to school on Monday 18th January, with online learning provided from Tuesday 5th January to Friday 15th January, inclusive.



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Year 0 will return to school on Tuesday 12th January because they are an examination year group who are preparing to sit their English Literature at the end of this academic year, with online learning provided from Tuesday 5th January to Monday 11th January, inclusive

Year 1 will return to school on Monday 11th January because they are an examination year group who are preparing to sit their GCSE and BTEC summer, with online learning provided from Tuesday 5th January to Monday 11th January, inclusive

Year 2 will return to school on Monday 18th January, with online learning provided from Tuesday 5th January to Friday 15th January, inclusive. Online lessons for Sixth Form students will be provided live via Zoom

Year 3 will return to school on Monday 11th January because they are an examination year group who are preparing to sit their A Level and BTEC exams this summer, with online learning provided from Tuesday 5th January to Monday 8th January, inclusive. Online lessons for Sixth Form students will be provided live via Zoom

For our Sixth Form students, there are a few exceptions to the rules. At Year 12 and 13 students who have external examinations this January should continue to have face-to-face lessons from the 5th of January for the subjects they are to be examined in. These external exams are still scheduled to take place. All other lessons for these students will continue to be taught live online until the group is due to be back on site as the staggered return should have a few questions please do not hesitate in contacting Mrs Challis on fchallis@educ.somerset.gov.uk

COVID-19 Testing

You may have heard that testing for those without symptoms is beginning across the country using new, quicker COVID tests.

Even though we will be testing students, if your child has symptoms of COVID-19 they must not attend school. You should book a test for them the usual way, using the NHS Test and Trace Service.

Along with the other protective measures we are taking, these tests will help students to remain in school safely. Up to one third of people who have COVID-19 experience no symptoms. By testing we will help to stop the virus spread and help keep our school open as safely as possible. The test is voluntary, but I would encourage everyone to take it.

We will be testing all staff and students who want to participate from Wednesday 4th January 2021.

The test is quick and easy using a swab of your nose and throat. For under 18s, staff will support the swab process.

Results (which take around half an hour from testing) will be shared directly with staff and pupils participating. Where participants are under 16, parents or legal guardians will also be informed.

We know these tests work - in validation studies conducted by Oxford University and Public Health England, they were shown to be as accurate in identifying a case as a PCR test (99.68% specificity). The tests have lower sensitivity but they are better at picking up cases when a person has higher viral load, hence the need to test frequently.

Testing will be offered free of charge.

I am very pleased to be able to offer COVID-19 testing for every student, twice and 3-5 days apart, before they return to school. Although there has been a lot of noise around how schools can offer testing and whether they should, we feel strongly that this is a great opportunity for us to detect positive cases after the holidays and look after those people while they self-isolate so that we can break chains of virus transmission. I hope that this will allow us to have a less disrupted term ahead with less student and staff absence from school. I would therefore strongly encourage that all students are tested, so that we can keep our school and wider community safer.

Firstly, in order to schedule our testing appointment slots over the coming weeks, we need a response on behalf of every child to provide parental consent for testing. Please fill out this short consent form once for each child you have at the school. The consent form gives the chance for you to decline testing for your child. No child will be tested without their parent's consent. Testing will take place between Tuesday 5th January and Friday 15th January in the Sports Hall. It will be staffed by Holyrood Academy staff and a small number of volunteers who are known to our school (either ex-members of staff or existing volunteers). Where volunteers will have direct contact with children, they will either be DBS checked or will be supervised at all times by a member of staff who is.

The online consent form for parents who have children in Years 7-11 can be found [here](#)

Sixth Form students can give consent themselves and so should use [this form instead](#)

It is essential that we have a completed consent form for every child who attends the school, even if you wish to decline for your child to be tested. Please complete this consent form by the end of **Monday 4th January**.

I will be in touch on Monday 4th January with precise details of what testing involves and when testing will be offered to all groups of students. At the moment, we are planning to start testing students using the following timetable from Tuesday 5th January. This is however dependent on testing materials arriving on Monday 4th January as per the DfE's commitment. Parents who have more than one child at Holyrood should bring all children at once, during the time slot for the eldest child.

Mass Testing in w/c 4th January 2021

- Monday 4th January 2021 - Staff return to school for INSET Day. Set up testing centre, training and begin staff testing.
- Tuesday 5th January 2021 - Test 1 Year 11, Test 1 Year 13 using Sports Hall (plus their younger siblings who attend Holyrood).
- Wednesday 6th January 2021 - Test 1 Year 10 using Sports Hall (plus their younger siblings who attend Holyrood)
- Thursday 7th January - Test 1 Year 12 and Mop-up Day (plus their younger siblings who attend Holyrood).
- Friday 8th January 2021 - Test 2 Year 11, Test 2 Year 13 using Sports Hall (plus their younger siblings who attend Holyrood).

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Mass Testing in w/c 11th January 2021

- Monday 11th January 2021 - Test 1 Year 9, Test 2 Year 10 using Sports Hall (plus their younger siblings who attend Holyrood).
- Tuesday 12th January 2021 - Test 1 Year 8, Test 1 Year 7 using Sports Hall .
- Wednesday 13th January 2021 - Mop-up Day using Sports Hall.
- Thursday 14th January 2021 - Test 2 Year 9, Test 2 Year 12 using Sports Hall (plus their younger siblings who attend Holyrood).
- Friday 15th January 2021 - Test 2 Year 8, Test 2 Year 7 using Sports Hall

Until then, I hope you enjoy the remainder of the break and I look forward to another successful year for Holyrood in 2021.

Yours sincerely

Dave MacCormick

Holyrood Academy

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