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## Important information about January start of term arrangements

Dear Parents/Carers

Contrary to what you might expect, we hear about government education policy through media leaks and ministerial speeches, just like you. We receive formal notification and guidance at a later date.

Late yesterday, the Education Secretary, Gavin Williamson, announced that only Year 11 and 13 will be returning to school at the start of January. All other secondary school year groups will be educated remotely for the first week back.

I am not clear about the rationale and detail of this announcement. Neither am I confident that the government position will not change (perhaps multiple times) before January.

However, please assume the following:

- **Only Year 11 and 13 will be returning to school on Tuesday 5 January 2021.**
- **Years 7, 8, 9, 10 and 12 will work from home from Tuesday 5 to Friday 8 January 2021.**

Year 11 mock exams will go ahead as planned. Year 13 will have their normal lessons.

We will move to remote learning for all other year groups. This means there will be a mix of online lessons, recorded materials, and set work. Further details will follow.

**Currently, we expect all year groups to be back in school by Monday 11 January.**

### Emergency childcare for vulnerable/key worker children

Vulnerable and key worker children are entitled to a childcare place, if required. We have a list of those parents who have provisionally booked a place from earlier this term. However, if your circumstances have changed and you now require, and are entitled to, a place, please email Mrs Sturla at [nsturla@farmors.gloucs.sch.uk](mailto:nsturla@farmors.gloucs.sch.uk).

Please be aware that the 'emergency childcare' provision is supervised study, not taught lessons. These students will be provided with IT access to complete the work and participate in online tutorials in the same way as children at home will be doing.



We will be contacting parents about childcare places, and those whose children are entitled to free school meals, separately to this communication with further information.

### Contact tracing over the Christmas break

Schools have been asked to undertake contact tracing for **any students developing symptoms of Covid-19 up until midnight on Sunday 20 December who subsequently test positive for Covid-19**. We will be on call up until midnight on Christmas Eve.

It is very important that you inform us using our dedicated email address ([covid@farmors.gloucs.sch.uk](mailto:covid@farmors.gloucs.sch.uk)) if and when:

- Your child develops symptoms of Covid-19 this weekend.
- Your child tests positive for Covid-19 having become symptomatic at any time before midnight on Sunday 20 December.

**After this time, the national Test and Trace programme will carry out contact tracing if your child tests positive.** Please use the above email address to inform us if your child tests positive at any time over the Christmas period, but be aware that we will only act on this information if they were in school in the 48 hours prior to becoming symptomatic.

### Rapid testing in secondary schools

The other announcement this week was that secondary schools will be running a rapid-testing facility from January. The intention is to make available rapid-tests to all staff (weekly) and all staff and students identified as close contacts (daily) so that they may continue to attend school. Again, this is news to us.

Schools have been told that they will be setting up this facility, and recruiting and training staff, from the first week in January. This is an extremely ambitious plan and is very unlikely to be in place at the speed that has been envisioned. However, any proposal to keep staff and students in school is one that we will seriously consider and do our best to deliver.

However, please be aware that my senior team will be taking at least one week's break over Christmas to re-charge and enjoy time with their families. You will undoubtedly hear more through the media about these grand plans, but please wait to hear from me before assuming anything. I will let you know what is *actually* going to happen as soon as I am able.

Lastly, I would like to thank you for your kind messages of gratitude and support to staff over the last week. Every message has been displayed in our staffroom (9 notice boards in total!) and this has given staff the lift they needed to see them through to the end of a very long term. I am so grateful for your support and kind words.

Once more, I wish you a restful Christmas and New Year.

Yours sincerely

Matthew Evans  
Headteacher