

1st January 2021

Dear Parents and carers,

Spring Term 2021

A very Happy New Year to all parents, carers and pupils. We write today with a comprehensive overview of the arrangements for the start of term, taking account of the government announcements over recent days about the reopening of schools. This is a long letter and contains all of the information pupils, parents and carers need in one place. Please take time to read all of the information carefully and then spend some time taking your child through the plans set out below for the start of the spring term.

Phased re-opening of Secondary Schools

The following schedule sets out what pupils are doing for each week of the phased reopening plan announced by The Government.

	Week 1 06.01.22 to 08.02.21	Week 2 11.01.22 to 15.02.21	Week 3 18.01.21 to 22.02.21
Year 7	Blue	Blue	Yellow
Year 8	Blue	Blue	Yellow
Year 9	Blue	Blue	Yellow
Year 10	Green	Green	Yellow
Year 11	Green	Yellow	Yellow
Year 12	Green	Green	Yellow
Year 13	Green	Yellow	Yellow
Vulnerable Pupils (see below)	Purple	Purple	Yellow
Pupils with an EHCP (see below)	Purple	Purple	Yellow
Pupils whose parents are critical workers (see below)	Purple	Purple	Yellow

Blue	Study at home using the Remote Curriculum	Green	Microsoft Teams lessons supported by further study at home using the Remote Curriculum	Yellow	Return to school	Purple	Face to face provision in school
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Vulnerable pupils, those with an EHCP and/or those whose parents are critical workers

If your child is classed as vulnerable or if you or your partner is a critical worker, then your child can return to school on Wednesday 6th January. If you qualify as a critical worker and you need your child to attend school at any point leading up to pupils' full return on 18th January, please complete this form:

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=hVh-eMTdU0Wnv6udzkyo6lpr1Q9ztIhBvW7RNkHV3MdUMjY5WE44UTQyVIJLNEhKSzBKVIISUFZSTC4u>

Parents whose work is critical to the coronavirus (COVID-19) response include those who work in health and social care and in other key sectors as outlined in the following link: <http://bit.ly/34nAlcF>

Vulnerable students and students of critical workers on site from Wednesday 6th January will follow the routines that are already established and they will need to wear full uniform. Normal catering arrangements will apply for break and lunch.



If you have any queries regarding these arrangements then please contact Mr Ali via w.ali@decschool.co.uk

Pupils who have BTEC exams in the first week

A small number of pupils have BTEC examinations in week beginning 4th January. These are going ahead but pupils will only attend school for their exam. Following the exam, pupils will return home to continue working remotely. We will make contact on Monday with all pupils who are sitting BTEC examinations next week to guide them through how these will work when they arrive on site, together with details of times of arrival and other key preparation.

Remote Learning and Contact

Pupils in years 7, 8 and 9 who are working from home are to continue with their normal school timetable, accessing the relevant week and lesson number on the remote curriculum plan for each of their subjects. Your child's remote learning package can be found via the school website: <https://www.decschool.co.uk> by accessing the "Remote Learning" tab. Remote learning has been broken down into individual subjects and links to the curriculum content being taught at this point in the year.

Pupils in years 10, 11, 12 and 13 who are working from home should continue with their normal school timetable by joining 'live lessons' on Microsoft Teams with their teachers. A register of pupils who have joined will be taken in the first 10 minutes of every lesson. Pupils will need to be logged into Microsoft Teams at the start of the day and links will appear throughout the day inviting them to their lessons as they commence.

Where joining 'live lessons' or accessing the online work is challenging due to IT facilities at home, please email Mr. Ali via w.ali@decschool.co.uk with specific details of your difficulties and we will do our best to support. Each case will be carefully considered and support such as a laptop or alternative solutions such as paper based work will be provided where possible.

All pupils must submit work on a daily basis from 6th January 2021 to 15th January 2021, inclusive, to their teachers via the following methods:

1. Via a specific platform (i.e. Seneca, Mathswatch or Activelearn)
2. Via faculty support email addresses (see table below):
 - Work can be submitted as pictures of completed work or other files (e.g. word documents) as attachments in the email.
 - The title of the email must contain the teacher's name and class (e.g. Miss Smith 8A English).
 - Work must be clearly labelled with the pupil's name.

Faculty	Contact	Email address
Mathematics, Psychology, Statistics and H&S	Ms E Raine	mathssupport@decschool.co.uk
English and Drama	Mr T Hutton/ Mrs R Atton	englishsupport@decschool.co.uk
Science	Mr B Feenan	sciencesupport@decschool.co.uk
MFL	Ms V Lopez	mflsupport@decschool.co.uk
Humanities (Geography, History and RE)	Mrs N Delaney	humanitiessupport@decschool.co.uk
PE, Music and Art	Mr J Smith	pecreativesupport@decschool.co.uk
Media, Computing, Business and Tech	Mr O Hanson	mediatechsupport@decschool.co.uk

The submission of pupil work and/or their attendance to 'live lessons' on Microsoft Teams will be monitored on a daily basis. Where engagement is a concern, we will likely be in contact with you to raise our concerns and ensure your child engages fully in order to make good progress whilst working at home. If you or your child require any clarification related to the work set, please email the support email addresses above.

Microsoft Teams Lessons – Years 10, 11, 12 and 13.

During phased start to the new term, we will be enhancing our remote learning package for pupils who have examinations in 2021 and/or 2022, with additional Microsoft Teams contact from their teachers. All pupils should follow their usual timetable of lessons during the phased re-opening, by completing the remote work available via the school website. Pupils in Year 10, 11, 12 and 13 will also be contacted by their teachers during their normal lesson time, via Microsoft Teams. This contact will be to ensure clarity of instruction, allow the pupils to ask any questions about the work, and for teachers to explain and model more challenging concepts. Pupils will then be directed to complete work from the website and to submit their work, and to complete any quizzes that have been set, for their teachers to assess their progress. If a pupil in Years 10-13 does not engage with the Microsoft Teams lessons, there will be additional contact from school to support home learning.

Microsoft Teams can be downloaded for free and works perfectly on a mobile phone or tablet as well as a computer (<https://teams.microsoft.com/uswe-01/downloads>)

If you do have any difficulties with IT access please contact Mr Ali via w.ali@decschool.co.uk.

In addition to participation during the Teams lessons, all pupils can request additional guidance from their teachers via the faculty support email address, all of which are available on the remote work instructions via the school website and earlier in this letter.

Pupils who are eligible for Free School Meals

From 6th January, if your child is eligible for free school meals, we will contact you to ask if you would like a food parcel to be prepared for the duration of the time your child is working at home. Collection arrangements will be made clear once we receive your request. Food parcel collections will commence in week beginning 11th January 2021.

COVID-19 Testing for Staff and Pupils

We are working to keep DEC as safe as possible. You may have heard that testing for those without coronavirus symptoms is beginning across the country using new, quicker COVID-19 tests known as 'lateral flow tests'.

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

We will be testing all staff and pupils who want to participate from week commencing 4 January 2021.

An instructional leaflet with some more information can be found on the website. Once we have received consent forms and we have our system updated with who is to be tested, we will write to you again to set out the schedule for testing in the first two weeks of term.

If you are happy for your child to be tested, please fill in the relevant online forms when we send them to you next week.

Those taking the test will be supervised by trained staff. The 'lateral flow' tests are quick and easy using a swab of your nose and throat. For under 18s, staff can oversee the swab process and pupils carry out the swab themselves. 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.

Consent and Registration

To process the test, we will register all participating pupils.

We will require parents and carers who are consenting to complete two forms. These will be sent out early next week for completion.

What if a pupil tests positive?

Participating staff and pupils who test positive will be informed about their results individually. Where participants are under 16, parents or legal guardians will also be notified. Guidance on safe travel and additional precautions will be provided along with test results. Pupils will need to take a further 'PCR test' (similar to those done in local and regional testing sites) on the same day (or as soon as possible). School will be able to provide these PCR test kits to perform at home or you can go to www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test or call 119 to book a follow-up test. If ordering a PCR test yourselves, they should choose to visit a drive-through test site if possible, as it is faster than requesting a home test. During this time while they wait for the PCR result (via text / email) they will need to self-isolate as will all other members of the household. If the PCR test returns a positive result the pupil and the household will have to self-isolate and follow the guidance from NHS Test and Trace.

What happens if the test is negative?

They will be able to return to school and resume their activities as normal (see reopening schedule above). A pupil will only be told if they test positive on a 'lateral flow' test, so if you do not hear you can assume it was negative. A small number of pupils may need to repeat the test if the first test was invalid or void for some reason.

What if a close contact at school/college tests positive?

A close contact of someone in school who has tested positive for COVID-19 will be able to return to school if they agree to be tested once a day for 7 days and the test is negative. If they do not want to take the test, they will need to self-isolate as per the national guidelines. This does not apply to household members or close contacts outside of school who will still need to self-isolate. Further details will be provided at the time, but if you would prefer to self-isolate instead of doing daily testing, you can.

What if my child develops symptoms?

This testing programme at school is for people with no symptoms. If your child develops symptoms at any time (such as a high temperature; a new, continuous cough; or a loss or change to their sense of smell or taste) they must immediately self-isolate, and book a test by calling 119 visiting <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>. We will support our staff and pupils throughout, but please contact us if you need this information in any other language or format or if you have any questions. You can contact us in the usual way, with the most effective being enquiry@decschool.co.uk.

Can I access The Government's announcements directly?

Yes. Please use the links below to see all of the guidance we are working from.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/education-secretary-sets-out-school-contingency-plans-for-england>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-asymptomatic-testing-in-schools-and-colleges/coronavirus-covid-19-asymptomatic-testing-in-schools-and-colleges>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/asymptomatic-testing-in-schools-and-colleges>

Thank you for persevering through all of the information above. We will be publishing an accompanying set of videos early next week to recap, and to provide a walk through for parents and carers on how COVID-19 testing will work in school.

Please also look out for the link we will send for testing registration/ consent, and details of the day and time your child is required to attend school for their COVID-19 test.

As always if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us via enquiry@decschool.co.uk.

Yours faithfully,



Mr M Dunn
Head Teacher