



MAIDEN ERLEGH

SCHOOL

Headteacher: Mr P. Gibson

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Dear Parent/Guardian

Information regarding Rapid Testing and Returning to School in January

I am aware that you have received a number of communications from us today and I would like to apologise for this. Unfortunately, we are being given late guidance on plans for January and this is being constantly updated with new information. As a result, I have delayed the sending of this letter to ensure I have the most up to date plans available to share with you. This letter will outline the start of term and also provide more information on rapid testing in schools which has been shared with the public by the Department for Education this week.

January Opening

As part of the latest announcement, the Department for Education has stated that only students in examination year groups should return for face to face teaching in the first week back. Whilst we understand Year 10 have their RP exam this summer, we have made the decision to only have Year 11 and 13 students on site in the week beginning 4 January. **All other students (Years 7-10 and 12) will follow their normal timetable remotely from home** and information for each lesson will be available on Google Classroom. We will welcome back all year groups on site week beginning 11th January.

Pop Up Provision

We will, of course, be running our 'pop up' provision and information about this can be found below:

We are again offering a 'Pop Up' School provision from Monday 4 January – Friday 8 January for students who fall into the categories as defined here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision>

The 'Pop Up' School will be based on the normal Maiden Erlegh School (Silverdale Road) site. Students will be based within a computer room, they will access Google Meet and Google Classroom to complete the work set or access live lessons. Students will not be doing practical PE lessons and therefore will be required to wear their normal school uniform. Students will follow a normal school day (including their staggered starts and finishes).

They need to bring in their books, equipment and some headphones (these will not be provided in school). We would ask for your support in providing a snack for your child for break time, packed lunch and a water bottle (unless they are Free School Meals, in which case lunch will be provided as normal).

If you need to use this facility, your child falls into one of the categories defined in the link above and your child has not been advised to isolate, then please email: s.bendall@maidenerleghtrust.org by 5pm on Monday 21 December. After this point, we will organise supervising staff and may not be able to add further students into the provision.

FSM

If your child is entitled to a free school meal and you would like this provision while remote learning takes place from home, please would you contact the school office to request this before 8am on Monday 4 January 2021. We can then ensure that a food parcel is ready for collection from reception on this day. We will contact you to advise of a collection time if you require this parcel.

IT requirements

If your child does not have an electronic device with which they can connect to live lessons from home, please do let us know. We will then try to ensure that a loan device is prepared and ready for collection from Monday 4th January 2021, although we have a limited supply available. We have also been given a limited number of data sims for mobiles which could be used for anyone with serious connectivity issues. For both of these points, please contact the school office.

Rapid Lateral Testing

It has also been announced that schools will be able to carry out rapid testing of both students and staff which is a stance we fully support as, if managed properly, can identify asymptomatic cases and also limit the need for isolation for many potential contacts. We see this as a major step forward for enhancing our safety measures against this terrible virus.

There are many unanswered questions at this stage and guidance is not finalised, indeed Nick Gibb who is the Schools Minister confirmed this morning that detailed guidance will be provided next week. We are also aware that changes could still be made to what has already been published such as the extent of involvement by the armed forces. Issues surrounding logistics, delivery of the kits, layout of the testing facility, recruitment of volunteers, PPE delivery and also when training will be provided to testing staff all still need to be clarified. As always, I want to be as transparent as possible with you and therefore highlight that it is highly unlikely that this testing process will be ready for implementation at the start of the spring term. The logistical issues around testing for over 2000 people is complex and we must ensure we do this properly to ensure the maximum positive impact. We are also aware of the recent pilot testing in care homes taking up to 3 weeks to implement in settings much smaller than our school and I believe this context is important.

There are FAQ's at the following link:

<https://dfemedia.blog.gov.uk/2020/12/15/mass-testing-in-schools-your-questions-answered/>

To reiterate, I genuinely believe that this is an extremely positive step forwards and I am excited that, as a school, we will be able to manage the spread of COVID even further. In addition, I need to make it clear that this is an opt in service and parents have the right to opt their child out of testing.

If you are willing to volunteer to help us with the process of rapid testing, please email the school office and we will be in touch as soon as possible. Thank you in advance to anyone willing to help and also to those who have already offered help on the back of our CEO's letter.

And finally...

I hope you all have a wonderfully relaxing festive break and thank you for your ongoing support. This has been a year like no other and I am incredibly proud of how the community has rallied together.

Take care, stay safe and I look forward to seeing you all in 2021.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'P. Gibson', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Mr P Gibson
Headteacher