

## **Rapid testing in schools and the return to school in 2021 (Government Announcements)**

While acknowledging that this isn't perhaps the ideal moment to be announcing a huge mass testing programme, with only a few days of the Autumn term left, we do welcome the principles behind weekly testing. This should provide an extra level of reassurance to all in our school community and reduce the need for self-isolation, along with the disruption this causes to learning. Frustratingly, we have very little information about the arrangements and practicalities, in fact, we know little more than that shared by the Secretary of State in the House of Commons yesterday and the details being reported in the broadcast news.

### **What we do know**

1. 4<sup>th</sup> January 2021 will now be an 'extra INSET day', provided by the Government to help schools prepare for the new testing opportunity. **School will be closed to ALL students and there will be no remote learning provision on this day.**
2. 5<sup>th</sup> January 2021 is when term starts for students, with a mix of face-to-face and remote learning provision as detailed below:

Year 11: 'Exam groups' are expected in school from the first teaching day (5<sup>th</sup> January). We presume that this will include testing in school to identify and prevent transmission.

Year 10: They will begin the term on the 5<sup>th</sup> January 2021 with remote learning. The examples currently provided of 'exam groups' are year 11 and 13. As we consider Year 10 as an exam year group, we have queried the guidance and await a response. We hope to be able to bring them back into school as soon as possible.

Years 7, 8 & 9: The guidance establishes that remote learning will start on the 5<sup>th</sup> January 2021 and that students are expected to return on the 11<sup>th</sup> January 2021 for face-to-face teaching. There is some suggestion that if schools are able to establish testing protocols in the first week, they may be able to get these years back into school quicker.

For the four days of that week (Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> – Friday 8<sup>th</sup>) when remote learning will be provided for most students, there will be provision in school for vulnerable students and those whose parents are keyworkers. **We will be in touch with these families on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> January to discuss this.**

There are many unanswered questions, and we expect things to become clearer over time. We hope that this clarity comes in time for us to take advantage of these testing opportunities to get all our students back into school quickly and safely. We will, of course, provide updates as more information is provided to us.

### **New Timetables for 2021**

During the summer, driven by the Covid-induced adaptations that we realised we would need, we pieced together a timetable that would support our safe re-opening. During this term, we have been reviewing our progress, making a note of developments we would like to make to enhance our students' experience, and subsequently taking steps to fit these into our revised January timetable.

The main change for January will be developments and adaptations to our students' timetables. These changes will maintain the benefits of minimising mass movement around the building, while also enhancing students' learning experiences. We aim to share these new timetables with students before the break. We will also have copies ready for their first day back, which will begin with a form period.

### **We will return to school on a week 2.**

## **Steps to remove the need for whole bubble isolation at KNBS**

Our new timetables will go hand in hand with an adapted approach to students being asked to isolate. For single cases in a year group, we will move to tracing close contacts (those sat very close to confirmed cases or those who have spent their free time in close contact with a confirmed case). For multiple confirmed cases, we will have to move to isolating a whole class, half year group or a whole year group. However, wherever possible, we will avoid this from January.

### **Test and Trace leading up to Christmas**

As we all prepare for our break, we have been tasked with continuing the Test and Trace process into the first few days of the holiday. This is to be able to provide our school community with up-to-date information regarding positive student cases. However, we need your assistance to do this.

If your son has a positive test for COVID-19, it is vital that you inform us using the [covid19@knbs.co.uk](mailto:covid19@knbs.co.uk) email address.

If your son was in school for any part of the 48 hours before his symptoms (the infectious period), we will need to let any close contacts know so that they can manage their interactions and isolate as appropriate.

### **The Eagle**

We are immensely excited to launch our new-look school magazine, The Eagle, this week. Issue 1 can be accessed online at <https://sway.office.com/SHeLP02GV9LDnbWT?ref=Link>. We hope you will be as pleased with this as we are, and that you will enjoy learning more about school life at KNBS. Happy reading 😊

### **Christmas Wishes**

We would like to take this opportunity to wish you and your family a very Merry Christmas and the happiest of New Years. I think it is fair to say that after all 2020 has thrown at us, we ALL deserve this.

See you in 2021!