



Dear Parents and Carers

I hope that this letter finds you and your family well and that despite the restrictions in place and a number of our students, staff and families self-isolating or testing positive for the virus, you were able to enjoy the Christmas period.

You will probably have seen or read the news stories prior to the Christmas break about schools and colleges being asked to implement a phased start to the spring term, and being invited to set up a mass Covid testing programme for pupils and staff. Yesterday, in a statement to Parliament the Secretary of State for Education, Gavin Williamson outlined further details regarding this and in response to the significant increase in Covid-19 cases over the holiday period. I am writing to you today to explain how Warlingham School intends to respond to the requests made of schools, to outline provision for next week (week beginning 4th January) and request important information from you to facilitate our phased return and testing programme.

I am sure that like me you will have followed with interest information on the new variant of Covid-19 and its increased transmissibility within communities. The positive news about the approval of the second vaccine, developed within the UK, provides us all with hope for the new year.

A one-week delay to the planned staggered return of secondary schools has been confirmed with students in exam year groups (Years 11 and 13) returning to school during the week beginning 11th January and students in all other year groups returning full time on the 18th January. Further clarification and information is still being provided to schools, following announcements. We recognise that arrangements may be subject to further review and changes nationally, which we will of course respond to and communicate to you.

Phased start to term

Week beginning 4th January

As communicated prior to the Christmas holidays **Monday 4th January will be our scheduled INSET day in which staff will undertake training and no students will be in school or set remote learning.**

On Tuesday 5th January and for the rest of the week, only the following pupils should come in to school:

- Vulnerable children and children of critical workers
- The school will be open to students sitting public examinations during this week (more details regarding this will be shared with these students in due course)

If your child is vulnerable, we shall contact you separately to check that your child will attend school in person. Details of workers critical to the coronavirus (COVID-19) response and students in priority groups are available here <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision>

If you are a critical worker and require on-site provision for your child during this week, please complete the details on this form **by 9.00am on Monday 4th January** so that we can plan accordingly

https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=JJIPGEbQlOWK_zLlhujW6ivTUOQJp0xCtIEgcs-elpURjFOWjNYNFcxSFpEUjVQRUZGNFgyODE4Mi4u

During this first week of term, all other pupils should stay at home. We will be providing remote education for those pupils via Satchel in line with their school timetable.

Week beginning 11th January

From Monday 11 January only the following pupils should come in to school:

- Vulnerable children and children of critical workers
- Students in Year 11 and 13
- The school will be open to students sitting public examinations during this week (more details regarding this will be shared with these students in due course)

If your child is vulnerable, we shall contact you separately to check that your child will attend school in person. If you are a critical worker and require on-site provision for your child during this week, please complete the details on this form by 9.00am on Monday 4th January so that we can plan accordingly.

During the second week of term, all other pupils should stay at home. We will be providing remote education for those pupils via Satchel in line with their school timetable.

Week beginning 18th January

From Monday 18th January it is planned that all pupils will return to school.

Mass testing programme

We are positive about the potential for the mass testing of pupils and staff in schools, as a way of reducing the spread of the virus and enabling fewer pupils and staff to have to self-isolate. You can read more about how the government expects this programme to work [here](#).

These tests will take place at school using new, quicker COVID-19 tests known as 'lateral flow tests.'

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 our school open as safely as possible. The test is voluntary, but I would encourage everyone to take it. As part of our preparations for the coronavirus (Covid-19) testing programme for schools, we will be seeking consent for your child to participate in mass testing or serial testing and request that this is provided or withheld in as timely way to support our plans and preparation. We will publish more information on lateral flow tests and write to you with further information and a request for consent early next week.

Setting up this programme in schools is an incredibly complex operation. We have been sent a lot information about how it should work already, but more detailed guidance is being produced and shared by the government daily. We will keep you informed as these plans become more concrete.

Please accept our apologies for having to send this letter during the holidays and for the late notice regarding changes to the start of term for students. We are having to respond to a vast quantity of complex government guidance and an ever changing national and local picture.

Thank you for your patience, and all best wishes for a safe and enjoyable remainder of the holiday and a happy new year.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P Foster', with a horizontal line underneath.

Mr P Foster
Head Teacher