

Dear Parents and Carers,

I urgently need to update you on the latest developments so that you can prepare for what now lies ahead in the first week of January.

As you know, we chose not to take part in the *pilot* mass-testing programme initiated by the local authority. The timing of this 'offer' to join the *pilot scheme* was not ideal and I did not feel at all confident at that stage about the arrangements, the detail or the logistics, not least because we would be relying heavily on the support of outside sources and agencies with whom we would have to liaise during an exceptionally busy end to the term. We were also under pressure to commit one way or another in a very short time frame.

On the Thursday of the final week of last term, Gavin Williamson announced the staggered start to January, and I was compelled to update all about this latest change of plan. He made it clear that **the staggered start was designed to enable schools to carry out mass lateral flow testing, which was nothing to do with the aforementioned pilot.** We were now being given *more time* (through the staggered start arrangement) to carry out the mass testing, time that we had hitherto not been afforded.

Since then, the first week of the holidays up to and including Christmas Eve has been pretty hectic with meetings with other Cumbrian Heads and phone calls with Local Authority managers taking place most days. Much of my time has been spent trying to clarify the rules of the game and to establish potential feasibility of the *new mass testing initiative* (as opposed to the *pilot*). Most of the jigsaw pieces have now fallen into place and much of my confidence has been restored. Whilst I am still a little nervous, we received confirmation (on Christmas Eve!) from the DfE that the initial batch of test kits will arrive in early January, enabling us to train and test members of the school.

We have sufficient staff volunteers to run the revised set-up with a total of 29 staff involved in every session **including 3 nurses.** (In total, over 70 NTS staff have volunteered to assist on the testing days.) I am extremely grateful to all those who have stepped forward to help out here. I understand that we also have some volunteers amongst parents, too, which is wonderful, and I may well call for you to assist next week. The sports hall was set up on Christmas Eve and the pods are now in place, complete with privacy screens, seating, desks, one-way systems etc. We have carried out a full risk assessment. If we are being given this 'opportunity' and the window created by having fewer pupils in in the first week, we do have a moral imperative here, I believe, to make the most of it – for the sake of the pupils, staff and wider community. Moreover, it would also be far less effective if we postponed the majority of the testing to the second week or chose not to do any at all (we had considered both options) as most pupils would be attending lessons well before they are tested, potentially spreading the virus. And this is a crucial point.

**The plan now, then, is to test all 1400 members of the school in the first week:** all staff on **Monday 11th** (**when the school will be closed to pupils** except children of key workers and vulnerable children), **Year 11 and 13 on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup>**, then the **other year groups in batches of c.320 per day on Wednesday to Friday.** (Following the PM's briefing on 30.12.20, all our original dates have had to be pushed back a week.)

**Monday 4<sup>th</sup>-Monday 11<sup>th</sup> January (inclusive)      SCHOOL CLOSED AS PER LATEST ANNOUNCEMENT**  
(except for children of key workers and vulnerable children from Tue)  
(Monday 11<sup>th</sup> – Training Day for staff & staff testing)

**Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> January (THIS ONLY APPLIES TO YEARS 11 & 13 who will be attending school as normal this week)**

- **Year 11 to be tested in the first 2 hours starting at 9am – in this order:**
  - 11BI, 11CJ, 11CL, 11RC, 11KAM, 11VB, 11GCP, 11KLT, 11MJS, 11RD
- **Year 13 to be tested in P3 – in this order:**
  - 13CS, 13DJ, 13KR, 13LAH, 13PJ, 13PTC, 13SW
- We are looking into the possibility of splitting larger tutor groups over two adjacent rooms to increase social distancing (until the group has been tested).
- **Year 7 children of "key workers" & vulnerable pupils will be housed in C3 and tested in the afternoon. They will need to sign in at Reception as they did during the initial lock-down period in the summer, and go straight to C3 (not their Form rooms).**

**Wednesday 13th, Thursday 14th and Friday 15th:**

Year groups will be tested in Form groups, at a rate of approximately 320 children per day, as follows:

**Wednesday 13th – Year 7 and half of Year 10**

Form	Arrival time
7KW	9.15am
7RCG	9.30am
7SC	9.45am
7REM	10.15am
7GYB	10.30am
7EC	10.45am
7JFP	11.35am
7SK	12.00pm
10KC	1.30pm
10DRF	1.55pm
10SYB	2.20pm
10RLB	2.45pm

**IMPORTANT: CHILDREN AGED 11 (OR YOUNGER)**

**We have been advised that children aged 11 (or younger) may not be able to swab themselves effectively. We are asking, therefore, for ONE PARENT ONLY of each child aged 11 to accompany them throughout the process and to conduct the swabbing if their child is struggling. Those aged 12 and older can swab themselves.**

**Thursday 14th – Year 8 and half of Year 10**

Form	Arrival time
8CF	9.15am
8BW	9.30am
8JP	9.45am
8RH	10.15am
8LSP	10.30am
8CCM	10.45am
8JAM	11.35am
8LJL	12.00pm
10GDC	1.30pm
10CT	1.55pm
10SR	2.20pm
10SB	2.45pm

**Friday 15th – Year 9 and Year 12**

Form	Arrival time
9IL	9.15am
9RA	9.30am
9LJP	9.45am
9RL	10.15am
9KSF	10.30am
9RSS	10.45am
9AA	11.35am
9KM	12.00pm
12MDS/IB	1.30pm
12AH	1.45pm
12ALN	2.00pm
12JRC	2.15pm
12AMH	2.30pm
12TH	2.45pm

Pupils may of course walk to school if this is what they normally do and can then walk straight home afterwards. **There will be no provision at school for these children (Year 7-10 and Year 12) to remain on site. Once they have received their test result, they must leave the site immediately.**

## **IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR ALL PARENTS**

**It is vital that your child brings with them a COMPLETED CONSENT FORM. The test cannot take place without the form. These were posted out on the last Friday of last term. If you cannot find the relevant form, please telephone school and another form can either be posted or emailed to you. A copy is also attached to this message if you are able to print it at home.**

Please bring your child to the **SPORTS HALL** as per the time slots above. **Please park in the car-park adjacent to the sports hall, off the High Street.** This will be set aside specifically for your use. Car-park attendants will be on hand to direct you/your child to the side entrance of the sports hall, where the process of testing begins.

**Children should bring a warm coat and something to read when they come for testing. They will be required to wait for 20-30 minutes for the test result to come through.**

**Reminder:**

**Year 11 pupils and Year 13 students should attend for the whole of the first week, starting on the Tuesday 12th. Tuesday morning will be an extended Form Period to allow the testing to take place and children must bring with them work to do independently – revision, reading, homework etc.**

**Year 7-10 pupils and Year 12 students must only attend to be tested, as per the timings given above. There will be no provision for them at school outside these times. These children will be taught remotely, at home, as has happened in the past.**

**At the end of the test, your child will be given an information slip depending on the result (positive, negative or inconclusive). In the case of a test result that is inconclusive, the child will be re-tested immediately. If this proves inconclusive a second time, the child will need to leave site and get an NHS PCR test elsewhere. In the event of a positive result, the child will be given a letter with full instructions regarding isolation and will need to leave site/be collected immediately.**

If enough of the kit does not arrive, we may possibly return to the original plan of just testing Y11 and Y13 in the first week – over three days; contingency plan B (if no kit arrives) is to cancel mass testing for all and just carry out weekly testing of staff and testing of COVID contacts as and when they crop up (which will be happening anyway).

There may be yet more changes to the planned re-opening of schools in January and I will of course update you as soon as I can. Please do keep an eye on *Facebook* and the school website over the coming days.

Thank you in advance for your support and cooperation during these difficult times.

Happy New Year and enjoy the remainder of the holidays!

Mr DS Northwood, Headmaster.