



17th December 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

The government has today, **17th December 2020**, communicated to us that all secondary schools in England will be able to test more of their staff and students in a round of free coronavirus testing from the first week of January. The aim is to minimise disruption during the spring term by helping identify positive cases when pupils return to face-to-face education following the Christmas break. The offer of tests builds on the extensive protective measures already in place in schools and colleges.

We do not at present have information regarding how this will take place but it is important that I communicate with you at the earliest possible opportunity that, related to this the government has decided that secondary schools will have a staggered start to the new term.

With the expectation of further government guidance being issued over the holiday period, please check the Academy's website in advance of **5th January 2021** in case any update to the provisional arrangements set out below is necessary.

The government has communicated that students in exam year groups (Years 11 and 13), vulnerable children and children of critical workers will all attend school as usual from the start of term. Vocational exams scheduled for the week of 4th January will go ahead as planned.

In advance of the first lockdown, we contacted families of children in our current years 8-10 and 12 to establish which children have parents who are critical workers, we will shortly contact Year 7 families to ask you similar questions.

Students in all other year groups, Years 7, 8, 9, 10 and 12, will start the term on **5th January 2021** with full-time remote education. This will be as close as possible to the education students would get in class. The government's current position is that by no later than **11th January 2021** all students will be fully back in school receiving face-to-face education.

Although not confirmed, we currently believe that those students attending face-to-face education in the first week of term will be offered the first testing dates. Testing will be optional but strongly encouraged. Consent will be required from the student or parent as appropriate.

We understand that the staggered start is to allow schools to set up testing systems for all students on their return to face to face education. We are still awaiting details of exactly how these testing systems will operate.

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in the present to reach those dreams' Dr. Russell J. Quaglia



We will provide full details as soon as possible after we receive more clarification from the government.

In summary, students in Years 11 and 13, along with vulnerable children and children of critical workers will attend Rivers Academy as normal from **Tuesday 5th January 2021 (Monday 4th January 2021 is our planned inset day)**. Students in all other year groups will return to the Academy site on **11th January 2021** unless we inform you of an earlier return or the government's plans change further.

Any update to the above arrangements will be posted on the Academy's website and please could you check the website in advance of **5th January 2021**.

Thank you for your patience about the developing situation, thank you also for understanding that we receive notifications at the same time as you.

As in my previous end of term letter, I wish you and your family a healthy and happy holiday and New Year.

Yours sincerely,

Andria Singlehurst,
Principal.

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