

3rd January 2021

(By email)

Dear Parents/Carers,

Update on Return to School - January 2021

Despite the challenges, difficulties and the entire situation being far from normal, I trust that everyone was able to enjoy the festive season to some extent.

You will be aware from significant media coverage that returning to school for the Spring Term is not going to be as originally planned. Following the latest government guidance, I am writing to update you on developments regarding a change to our start of term arrangements, including mass testing through Lateral Flow Devices (LFD). Please note that this is based on current guidance and will change if we are advised differently.

In accordance with the most recent government guidelines, we have revised the previously planned return dates to school for pupils as follows:

Year Groups	Date to return to school
Primary age pupils	Week of Monday 4 th January – nearly all WeST primary schools have a training day on Monday 4 th . Term starts for most children Tuesday 5 th January.
Secondary age Years 11 and 13	Monday 11 th January. Remote learning week of 4 th January.
Secondary age Y7-10 and 12	Monday 18 th January. Remote learning from 4 th -18 th January.

Please check your child's school website for the specific requirements for returning to school.

Parents who are key workers or whose pupils are eligible for free school meals, who would like their children to come into school whilst their respective age group are engaged in remote learning should contact their individual schools. I would like to emphasise that this provision is put in place for our younger pupils who are unable to be left at home throughout the day. Older pupils will access remote learning from school as they did during the Summer Term. More details will be sent from individual schools regarding these arrangements.

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Parents of pupils eligible for free school meals and those of critical workers who use school transport will be contacted separately in the case of any revised arrangements.

Lessons for all pupils who are at home will be delivered from their published start of term date, remotely through each school's remote learning offer. Should you need any further guidance on accessing our remote learning provision, please do not hesitate to get in touch with your child's individual school.

Thank you to those amongst our parental body who have already volunteered to help us with this programme; we will be in touch shortly with more information. I would like to thank you all, as always, for your on-going support as we navigate this difficult time, and take this opportunity to wish all members of our community a very happy New Year.

Yours sincerely,



Rob Haring
CEO Westcountry Schools Trust

Coronavirus testing FAQs

What if a pupil tests positive?

Participating staff and pupils who test positive will be informed about their results individually. Parents or legal guardians will also be notified. Pupils will be given all the support that they need throughout this process. Staff will provide guidance on safe travel and additional precautions for other pupils will be looked after accordingly.

Pupils will need to take a further 'PCR test' (similar to those done in local and regional testing sites) on the same day (or as soon as possible). Staff will give parents guidance regarding this. During this time while pupils wait for the PCR result (via text / email) they will need to self-isolate. If the PCR test returns a positive result they will have to self-isolate and follow the guidance from NHS Test and Trace.

What happens if the test is negative?

They will be able to stay in school and resume their activities as normal. A small number of pupils may need to repeat the test if the first test was invalid or void for some reason.

What if a close contact at school/college tests positive?

A close contact of someone in school/college who has tested positive for COVID-19 will be able to return to school if they agree to be tested once a day for 7 days and the test is negative. If they do not want to take the test, they will need to self-isolate as per the national guidelines. This does not apply to household members or close contacts outside of school who will still need to self-isolate. Further details will be provided at the time, but if you would prefer to self-isolate instead of doing daily testing, you can.

What if my child develops symptoms?

This testing programme at school is for people with no symptoms. If your child develops symptoms at any time (such as a high temperature; a new, continuous cough; or a loss or change to their sense of smell or taste) they must immediately self-isolate, and book a test by calling 119 (England, Wales and Northern Ireland) or 0300 303 2713 (Scotland) or visiting <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>

Guidance for parents and students on what a positive or negative test means for your child and household can be found on pages 24 and 25 of the schools and colleges testing handbook using the link below:

[Schools & Colleges handbook \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/87414/schools-colleges-testing-handbook)