



Start of Term Arrangements and Lateral Flow Test Update

31/12/2020

Dear Parent/Guardian

I hope you have had a very happy and peaceful Christmas and have managed to enjoy time with your families.

Since I last wrote to you on 18th December, there has been a sharp rise in the number of coronavirus cases recorded across the UK. I am writing to you following the announcement this afternoon by the Education Secretary, Gavin Williamson regarding the return to school for both primary and secondary age students from January 2021. However, at the time of writing, we are still preparing for the start of the spring term as previously indicated. This will be as follows:

Monday 4 th January	Staff INSET day - focus on preparing for LFTs
Tuesday 5 th January	Staff INSET DAY - supporting on site and virtual learning
Wednesday 6 th January VIRTUAL LEARNING for all year groups to begin	Students with parents who are registered Critical workers Students with EHC plans Students with a social worker*
Monday 11 th January	All Exam Year Groups (plus vulnerable children/children of key workers*) Years 11 and Sixth Form
Monday 18 th January	All students return from Years 7-10

*Please email reception@utcplymouth.org if your child will be attending school before Jan 18th, if in years 7-10. Please note that attending onsite school for students in this category is optional. You will also receive a call on Monday or Tuesday by a member of staff if we feel that attending school will be in the best interest of your young person.

All students are expected to access remote education from home between 6th–11^h January. Once exam classes return, other year groups will continue to learn remotely until January 18th. This will be by materials set on Google Classroom by their class teacher. We will also offer live sessions and we can also send further work home by request. If you have any questions regarding this, please contact myself or your child's pastoral lead. All teachers are also available through email.

Many of you may be feeling anxious about the prospect of your child receiving a covid test on site but please be reassured that we are working hard to ensure that the process will be as quick and stress free as possible. Whilst taking the test is not mandatory it is strongly recommended in order to ensure that we minimise the spread of the virus. As a school, we are extremely proud of our low infection rate and these tests can only help to benefit us further whilst we await a vaccine.

Here is some information for you on the tests that you may find useful:

Lateral Flow Testing (LFT) in schools

The government has asked schools to conduct a LFT programme due to the concern that asymptomatic cases in young people will lead to the spread of coronavirus and a huge rise in cases in local communities.

What is a LFT?

The LFT is a type of COVID test. The person being tested is required to swab their nose and throat and the test is carried out immediately, with results being given in approximately 30 minutes.

What if the LFT is positive?

Staff and students who test positive will be informed about their results individually. Parents or legal guardians of students will also be notified.

What if the LFT is negative?

If the LFT is negative, no further action is required. However, it is vital that students still follow our social distance bubbles, have good hand hygiene, wear a facemask when moving around the building and have well-ventilated rooms.

We are continuing to work with the Department for Education in order to be in a position to provide testing to as many secondary-age students as soon as possible, for Covid-19, in January. The Government has still not informed us in detail of how the testing will be carried out in schools but as soon as we know, we will contact you again to ensure we have consent from you for your child to participate.

I do appreciate how difficult it is to change plans at this late stage which is why I wanted to contact you to give you as much time as possible to put arrangements in place. As you can imagine, this new change will be logistically difficult to manage therefore your patience will be much appreciated. We will communicate any further changes and updates as soon as possible on Monday 4th January 2021.

With best wishes for a Happy New Year,

Jo Ware

Head of School UTC Plymouth

Please visit our website www.utcplymouth.org and our Facebook page for further updates. https://docs.google.com/document/d/13y_nlc-ew2cCL0RpLR14VGszeMjvW14Z4jiGVAmMvIM/edit#