



Miss Sylvia Thomas – Principal of Banbury Aspirations Campus

31 December 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

Firstly, I do hope that you and your family have been able to enjoy the Christmas Holidays. I know that many plans had to be changed at the last minute and I am also aware that some much anticipated trips to see family members were unable to go ahead.

I know that you will have been following the news this week about the changed arrangements to the return to school of secondary school students. Yesterday the Education Secretary, Gavin Williamson, confirmed the following in a statement to the House of Commons:

- **Years 11 and 13** will not return to school until **Monday 11th January**. This is one week later than had been planned.
- **All other year groups** are expected to return in the week beginning **Monday 18th January**. This is also one week later than had been planned. I imagine this may change depending on the situation with Covid numbers
- **Vulnerable Students** and the **children of Critical Workers** are able to return from **Monday 4th January**. Thank you to our parents/carers who have already emailed me letting us know that your child needs this supervision from Monday 4th January. Plans have been made for these students. Please note that any students attending school are required to wear uniform. Those students who are coming in for supervision should arrive at the main front gate at 9.00 a.m. on Monday.

The reason for this national delay in the full return to school is to enable schools more time to prepare for the mass testing programme that it is hoped all students and staff will choose to be a part of. The tests have not yet arrived, but we are expecting them on Monday 4th January. Training needs to take place for the staff conducting the tests and the logistics of arranging up to 1000 tests (taken twice by everyone) also needs careful planning. You will have already received a Google form from me asking if you consent to your child having the lateral flow test.

We are hopeful that we will be able to do both the initial test and the repeat test for Years 11 and 13 between Tuesday 5th and Friday 15th January. Depending on our experience of conducting these tests, it may be possible that the return for Years 7, 8, 9, 10 and 12 will need to be phased during the week beginning 18th January. I will write to you nearer the time when the logistics of this have become clearer.

In the meantime, the start of the term will see all the students return to 'online' learning. Those students in need of supervision who are booked in to return on the 4th January will be supervised, completing the same work as their classmates. Although the government has said that work in the first week only needs to be set for Years 11 and 13, we have made plans to set this for all students and keep them busy and ready for their proper return. Live lessons online will begin Period 3 on Monday 4th January for all students.

The Secretary of State also indicated that the external assessments being taken by vocational students in the 6th Form in January will still go ahead as planned. We are keen that this does not adversely affect them and we will be making arrangements for these students to have some revision sessions in the week beginning Monday 4th January.

During the initial weeks of term, our canteen will be offering a reduced service to those students who are in school. If there are any students who are eligible for free school meals but are not going to be in school, there is still the opportunity to order a sandwich/bagette at lunchtime. This would need to be collected between 11am and 1pm from reception. Those families eligible for FSM will already have received a message about ordering on School Comms.

I am sorry for any inconvenience this delay to a proper return may cause you and your families. The government has said they will continue to review the situation and let us all hope that the spread of the new variant of Covid-19 slows down in the coming weeks. The roll out of vaccinations does at least give us something to be optimistic about.

Finally, I would like to wish you all a happy New Year. Let us hope that 2021 brings us better news on the horizon and that in twelve months' time we can look back at things to celebrate.

Best wishes to you all

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Sylvia Thomas'.

Miss Sylvia Thomas
Principal of Banbury Aspirations Campus