

**January 31<sup>st</sup> 2020**

Dear Parents and Careers

I have held off writing with final details for the start of term for the very simple reason that they were not confirmed until the Secretary of State's announcement this afternoon. I realise that this delay has been even more frustrating for families than it has been for schools and can only apologise for the inconvenience caused. It always feels a bit lame to say that the "situation is out of my hands", but on this occasion, I am afraid it is as simple as that.

Today's breaking news is twofold:

- From midnight tonight, Cheshire will be in Tier 4. The implications of this for families are at: [Tier 4: Stay at Home - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/tier-4-stay-at-home)
- The return to school for secondary students will be more staggered than was announced at the end of term in December

For the Academy this means that:

1. Next week we will only be open for face to face teaching for vulnerable students and the children of critical workers (see below)
2. ***The BTEC Sport exams will, however, go ahead as scheduled.*** Students will need to come in to school for these exams. Further details will follow at the start of next week.
3. We will progressively introduce online learning as the week progresses. We will prioritise exam classes in years 10 and 11. Please follow Show My Homework for details. We have obtained a number of additional laptops from the DfE to loan to families where the lack of equipment is a barrier to remote learning. We will allocate these on the basis of need. Please email [Paul.Reed@macclesfieldacademy.org](mailto:Paul.Reed@macclesfieldacademy.org) if you think your child would benefit from the loan of one of these laptops.
4. ***Years 10 and 11 will return to school for face to face teaching on 11<sup>th</sup> January.***
5. Apart from vulnerable children and the children of Key Workers, student in Years 7-9 will continue to learn remotely during the week beginning 11.1.21 ***and will return to school for face to face teaching on 18<sup>th</sup> January.***
6. Academy staff will spend next week preparing for the introduction of lateral flow testing, testing of staff will begin during that week. Preparation will include gaining parental consent for students to be tested. More information on this will follow next week.
7. Testing of students will begin during the week beginning 11<sup>th</sup> January 2021.

Vulnerable children are defined in the current guidance at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision>

Categories of vulnerable children include:

- Those with a child in need plan
- Those with a child protection plan
- Those who are looked after by a local council
- Those who have an education, health and care (EHC) plan
- Children on the edge of receiving support from children's social care services
- Adopted children
- Those at risk of becoming NEET ('not in employment, education or training')
- Those living in temporary accommodation,
- Those who are young carers

- Those who may have difficulty engaging with remote education at home
- Others at the school's discretion

The same guidance defines critical workers as those working in the following sectors:

- Health and social care
- Education and childcare
- Key public services
- Essential local and national government
- Food and other necessary goods
- Public safety and national security
- Transport
- Utilities, communication and financial services

(if you are unsure whether any of these categories applies to you, please check the detail of the guidance).

Before Christmas 20-30 parents contacted me asking that we make provision for their children because they fall under one or more of these categories. I am pleased to confirm that we will be able to accommodate all of these requests. These students whose attendance has been agreed in advance, should arrive at the Academy at 0850 on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> January. They will form a single "bubble" following the normal three lesson day with breaks at 1040 and 1240. It is not yet clear what provision the catering service will be able to make for such small numbers of students. Students should, therefore, bring a packed lunch.

This is not news that I wanted to be giving. Our children have missed more than enough school already. Please rest assured that we will do everything we can to ensure their education and safety over the next couple of weeks and to ensure that the implementation of mass testing means that we can provide interruption-free learning through the rest of the term even in the eventuality of further positive tests. Most importantly, today's news on the Astra Zeneca vaccine should be a source of local pride as well as, more widely, a tangible sign that the end of the anxiety and uncertainty of 2020 may be in sight – even if 2021 feels like it is beginning with more of the same.

I wish you all a safe, healthy and happy new year

**Richard Hedge**

**Headteacher**