Dear Parents/Carers,

Firstly, Happy New Year to you all and I wish you all the best for 2021.

Gavin Williamson the Education Secretary announced yesterday a number of changes that affect the start of term for secondary students. These changes have been made for a number of reasons:

1. There has been a recent and worrying increase in cases of Covid-19 infections across the UK.
2. A new variant of Covid-19 has been identified in all areas of the UK and this variant has the ability to infect more people and at a faster rate.
3. The Government wants schools to implement mass testing on the return to school for secondary students and schools need adequate time to plan and communicate this plan to parents/carers.

**Testing**

At this time the fine details of how mass testing will be implemented in schools is still unclear, but please be assured that **any testing at Brymore will only ever be conducted with the express permission of the student and parent/carer**. A separate letter will follow, hopefully on Monday, with further details and please remember participation in any testing is voluntary. Those that are tested will need to be tested twice, three days apart, and boys will be invited into school at allocated times.

**Boarders**

We are investigating the possibility of sending tests home in order to reduce the need for parents to bring their son into school. We are also hoping to be able to welcome back boarders from all Year groups from Monday 11th January providing they have returned two negative tests. For Years 7-10 this will be a week ahead of the scheduled return in other schools. Further details will be sent in a further letter on Monday.

**Details of school provision from the week beginning 4th January 2021**

* The 4th January is an INSET day and no online learning will be available
* Year 11 will be studying on-line from Tuesday 5th January and will be following the timetable that has been sent out previously. This will be sent home again on Monday. All lessons will be shared via Teams as they were during the previous lockdown.
* Boys whose parents are Key Workers in Years 7-11 can be in school from the 5th January 2021. To reserve a place in school from 5th January please complete the form using the following link: <https://forms.gle/ey1Ee8Equ6ix7tz66>. If you have already contacted Mr Winter then please assume, we already have the information we need.
* Years 7-10 will not be set additional work for this week but should consult Show My Homework and complete any outstanding items.

**Details of school provision from the 11th January 2021:**

* Year 11 will be physically in school from 11th January. Boarders can return from Sunday evening in the usual way.
* Years 7,8,9 and 10 will be studying on-line following the timetable sent out previously. All lessons will be shared via Teams as tutorials were during the first lockdown.
* It is hoped boarders in Years 7, 8, 9 and 10 will also be able to return however a further letter will be sent out next week.

**Details of school provision from the 18th January 2021:**

* All boys will be expected back in school.

As always, thank you for your support and understanding at this time. Due to the timing of the announcement, we have not had the opportunity to discuss the details as a group of staff and the test themselves are not due to arrive in school until Monday. It is the details that are important in making any plan work and rest assured I will write to you again early next week once I have a clear understanding of how the testing will be carried out. However, I also wanted you to know as soon as possible what our current thinking is so that you are able to plan accordingly.

Yours faithfully

Mark Thomas

Headteacher