

5th January 2021

Dear Parents/Carers,

I hope you all enjoyed Christmas with your family and the break from routine. I wish you all a Happy New Year, whatever that holds for you.

Following the government's announcement last night of a new national lockdown they stated that secondary schools will remain open only for vulnerable children and the children of critical workers. All other children will learn remotely until February half term.

This will override the plans for Year 11 and 13 pupils to return to school next week and for all other pupils to be back in school by 18th January.

We understand this will be a huge disappointment to families and you will have concerns about your child's education and the impact of a further lockdown on their mental wellbeing. We too share your concerns, but I want to reassure you that we will do all we can to support our pupils and their families during this time.

Learning

We think pupils will engage better with remote learning if they are able to see and hear their teacher and so all pupils in all year groups will have live lessons from Monday 11th January. The first part of the lesson will have some teaching input from their class teacher to activate prior knowledge and challenge pupils' misconceptions and knowledge and skill gaps. The pupils will then have tasks set to demonstrate their understanding.

Lessons will be on Teams and it is important that your child is able to log onto Teams. Please try to log on this week and if passwords need resetting press the link and our technicians will reset ready for the following day. If you have any other technical issues please contact Mrs. Porter c.porter@olcc.lancs.sch.uk.

This work will NOT be consolidation work. As pupils have already missed so much time in school we need to continue with the planned curriculum. If your child fails to engage with their learning it will affect their progress. Pupils with additional needs will have regular contact to support their learning and if you have any worries about their work I encourage you to contact the child's PSO by email.

If you need help with increasing data allowances due to online learning please follow the link below.

<https://get-help-with-tech.education.gov.uk/about-increasing-mobile-data>

Wellbeing

All pupils will also have one form time per week with their form tutor. This contact is important for pastoral reasons and all pupils are expected to attend.

Pastoral teams will be contacting pupils to check they are okay and will be encouraging wellbeing activities too.

Year 11 and Year 13 Exams

Following last night's announcement from the Prime Minister regarding GCSE and A-level exams: 'it is not possible or fair for all exams to go ahead this summer as normal. The Education Secretary will work with Ofqual to put in place alternative arrangements.'

We understand that many of you may be confused and anxious by this news and I want to reassure you that we will do our very best to keep you informed and support you through this difficult time. As we currently are not aware of the DFE/Ofqual's advice on what will happen for the rest of this academic year or the process for arriving at your final qualification grades you must continue to attend all lessons remotely via teams and complete any assignments that are set promptly and by the appropriate deadline. If you have any difficulties working from home, please let school know immediately - whether this is a technical issue or for any other reason.

It appears that the BTEC January exams are still going ahead - so please keep up with your revision if you have an exam pending. Also please ensure you have a mask with you and arrive punctually.

Please try not to worry and keep checking your emails. As soon as we have a clearer picture from the DFE/Ofqual on the way forward we will be back in touch.

Free School Meals

We are currently awaiting confirmation of government guidance as to how we can provide free school meals for those eligible over the lockdown period – we can only continue with the voucher scheme with their go ahead, and the current guidance suggests these may be replaced with FSM food parcels. We will of course inform parents as soon as we know more and any FSM provision will be backdated to cover this week.

Key Worker and Vulnerable Group

It was lovely to welcome this group of pupils back to school for lessons. Please do not send your child in to school without booking a place with their PSO. We need notice to arrange staffing so book as soon as possible.

Initially this group was required to wear school uniform as initially the arrangement was only for one week. Now it is for at least this half term pupils are allowed to wear their own clothes but will need to wear warm clothes that will be suitable for some exercise, this includes trainers. Make up and jewellery are still not permitted.

We also request that they bring headphones to allow pupils to access live lessons.

Covid cases in the area have risen steeply and pupils in school must respect social distance at break and lunch as well as lesson time. Please discuss this with them and ensure they have a clean mask each day for public transport and school time.

Testing

The government's plan to start mass testing this week has now been delayed. In the next week we will send out a consent form which will need returning to school. We respect your choice for your child and it will not be questioned. If we do start testing it will not be until later this half term and we will send information to you before any testing begins.

Finally

The situation is constantly changing and so we will try to keep you up to date with any changes in school. We will do this via email so please check that we have the most up to date email address and mobile numbers for all contacts. You will also find updates on our website www.olcc.lancs.sch.uk and on our Facebook page.

Please contact your child's PSO or schoolclosure@olcc.lancs.sch.uk with any major concerns and we will endeavour to get back to you as soon as possible.

As a Catholic school we will place our whole community in God's hands and pray that we are all kept safe until we can open school fully again.

Yours sincerely,

Helen Seddon

Headteacher