

5<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Dear Parents/Carers,

Following the Prime Minister's announcement last night, I regret to find ourselves in a further period of school closure. I do, however, believe that this is important in reducing the rate of transmission of the new variant of the virus, and will help to protect our community. Whilst we had anticipated that the return to school may be further delayed given the local situation, until hearing the News last night we had not been given any prior indication that this would continue until February half-term. As has always been the case, schools only get their information at the same time as the general public.

Whilst our preference would always be to have pupils in school for face-to-face learning, we now feel in a better position to deliver more effective remote learning through our blended curriculum. We have invested heavily in technology and training to facilitate this new way of teaching and learning. Staff have embraced this positively, and whilst inevitably there will be some technical hitches and possible staff absence, pupils will receive far more live lessons than previously. If you do have any technical difficulties accessing the online provision, please contact our IT Team at [support@sweynepark.com](mailto:support@sweynepark.com), who will be able to help you. As I mentioned in my previous letter, if you do not have the necessary device and/or data to access these lessons, please contact Mrs Welch, Deputy Headteacher, on [nwelch@sweynepark.com](mailto:nwelch@sweynepark.com) and we will seek support from the Department for Education's Laptops for Schools Scheme.

We have learnt from the previous period of school closure how important it is for pupils to maintain structure and routine in their day. Full engagement is vital to minimise any gaps in learning. With this in mind, please could we ask for your support in reminding your child to follow their normal timetable, to have necessary equipment for each lesson, take breaks as they would if they were in school, remove access to distractions, and, where possible, provide a quiet place for them to study.

We will continue to be required to submit daily attendance data to the DfE. If your child is unwell during this period, please notify us in the usual way. It is compulsory to attend all live lessons and registers will be taken to monitor attendance. You will be able to track your child's approach to remote learning via Go4Schools, where we have added new categories to monitor Attitude to Learning. In addition, your child will receive a weekly email from their Form Tutor, to check on their wellbeing and to see if they need any additional support. Please can you remind them to reply to this email, on the same day, to avoid the need for a follow up phone-call.

I know that for Year 11 pupils and Year 13 students this news is particularly unsettling and, for many, distressing. A separate letter will be sent shortly to their parents/carers regarding the cancellation of this summer's examinations. Further information will also follow about the January Vocational examinations for Years 10, 11 and 12, which will still be going ahead.

Given the short notice and length of the next National lockdown, should you be a Keyworker and your need for supervision for your child has changed, please do let us know as soon as possible by contacting Mr Bradley, Assistant Headteacher, on [rbradley@sweynepark.com](mailto:rbradley@sweynepark.com). The school will remain open for these pupils, and those who may be vulnerable. Within school, these pupils will be accessing

the same work as those learning from home. Please be aware that our school kitchen is currently closed and so pupils will need to bring a packed lunch with them.

Vouchers will continue to be provided to all families eligible for Free School Meals throughout this period of school closure. If you have any questions on this point, please contact Mrs Welch on [nwelch@sweynepark.com](mailto:nwelch@sweynepark.com).

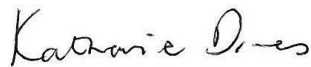
As you will know, over the last few weeks we have been preparing to start mass testing on site. This project would have been operational prior to the planned return for Year 11 and Year 13 next week. The supplies arrived at 7.30 am yesterday morning and so, before last night's announcement, we were well placed to begin testing! As it stands today, we do not know what the expectations will be in this regard when the pupils do return to school. Nevertheless, it would be very helpful to use this time to register your consent in order to hit the ground running as necessary. Thank you to those parents/carers who have already returned their consent forms, if you have not yet done so, I would be grateful if you could please email them to [pupilservices@sweynepark.com](mailto:pupilservices@sweynepark.com) over the next few weeks.

The DfE has today confirmed that we are to start testing all staff and pupils on site, for whom we have consent. To this end, if your child is attending school please can you indicate whether or not you give your consent.

I sincerely hope that you and your family will stay safe and well during this difficult time. If you do need any support, please contact us, the school office will remain open during school hours to receive calls.

As ever, please do continue to keep an eye on your emails and to check our website for information and updates.

Kind regards



Katharine Dines  
Headteacher

