



THE GRANGE SCHOOL

Mr V Murray – Headteacher

18 December 2020

Dear Parents, Carers and Students

This was not the way in which I envisaged the final day of term to be. Closing the school today due to a burst water main was the only option available. I apologise for any inconvenience this has caused, especially as most year groups have lost some lesson time over the past week.

During this letter, I want to cover the following:

- **Arrangements for the start of term;**
- **The number of local cases;**
- **Year 11 Mock examinations;**
- **Public examinations;**
- **Provision for children of Key Workers and Vulnerable children;**
- **Testing;**
- **An update on contact tracing.**

The announcement that there would be a staggered start to the Spring term came as a complete shock, especially as schools had been asked to remain open to the end of term. There was a logic, due to releasing social controls between 23 and 27 December, to revert to remote for this final week of term but this was not to be.

I have very few regrets, as Headteacher here at The Grange, however, being in a position yesterday where the school had to inform students that they would have to self-isolate on Christmas Day is one where I am truly sorry. That will live with me for a very long time.

Arrangements for the start of term

As we look towards January 2021:

- 4 January 2021 the school is closed to students, as it is a scheduled INSET Day;
- **Year 11** continue as planned with their Mock examination schedule from **5 January** and have study leave between examinations during this week. We want to minimise social contact and potential disruption to student mock exams, and the importance that these may hold, by asking students to revise / study from home and only attend school for their mock exams. There are more details below;
- **Year 13** will be in school as normal from **5 January**;
- **Years 7,8,9,10 and 12** will remain at home and study remotely, via Show My Homework and Microsoft Teams. All students will receive a timetable indicating which of their lessons will be 'live' by Monday 4 January 2021. You will be in school, as normal, from **11 January**;
- **Key Worker and vulnerable students** will be provided for in school in the same way as we developed our 'min-school' during the national lockdown in March. Please complete the survey below to assist us in our planning
- **The school will be fully open to all students from January 11 2021.**

Local COVID cases

I am in no doubt there are concerns relating to a possible surge in positive COVID-19 cases during January 2021. We have seen Buckinghamshire go into Tier 3 and local cases rise at an alarming rate:

[Daily summary | Bedgrove & Walton \(data.gov.uk\)](#)

I monitor this regularly and the local area has gone from below average to well above average in a matter of weeks and we have felt this in school.

Year 11 Mock Examinations

We will be going ahead, as planned with our Year 11 mock examinations which will start on the morning of Tuesday 5 January with the Year 11 Maths mock examination. Students and parents will have been emailed their timetables for these examinations, however, there is also a copy of the January timetables (both the public examinations and the mock examinations) posted on our website under Curriculum / Examinations:

<https://www.grange.bucks.sch.uk/curriculum/examinations>

As stated above, Year 11 students should attend only for their timetabled examinations during this week. Students need to arrive at school through the *Bus Lane* entrance between 8.40am and 8.50am, ready to be seated for their examination in either the Main Hall or Sports Hall as indicated on their timetable. Staff will be present to direct students appropriately. The Session 1 examination runs from 8.55am to 10.55am. If this is the only examination taken on the day, we ask students to leave the school site by the *Bus Lane* immediately after the exam. If students need to stay for the session 2 examination running from 11.25am to 1.25pm, a room will be made available for the 30 minutes between sessions. Unfortunately, the canteen will not be available between sessions or after session 2, so please bring any drinks or snacks you may need for the day.

Public Examinations

The public examinations will also go ahead as scheduled. The public examinations for the first week are list below and the ones for week beginning 11 January onwards will go ahead as planned, as per our examinations timetable:

Wednesday 6 January 2021 – Morning Session

BTEC Business – Developing a Marketing Campaign – IT4/IT5 – 3h00min (Year 12/13)

BTEC Sports – Fitness Training & Programming – Youth Centre - 2h30min (Year 12)

Thursday 7 January 2021 – Morning Session

BTEC Music – The Music Industry – Main Hall – 1h00min (Year 11)

BTEC Construction – Construction Technology – Main Hall - 1h15min (Year 11)

Friday 8 January 2021 -Afternoon Session

BTEC Health & Social Care – Human Lifespan Development – Main Hall – 1h30min (Year 12/13)

If you have any questions about the examinations please email Becky Brown Deputy Headteacher at bbrown@grange.bucks.sch.uk

Provision for Key Worker and Vulnerable Students

As during the first lockdown, we are able to offer in-school support to families who are key workers or have a vulnerable child. If you would like your child to attend on Tuesday 5 January to Friday 8 January, please complete the attached form as soon as possible.

[Key Worker Form](#)

[Vulnerable Child](#)

Mini School will be open from 8.40am to 2.50pm, where students will have access to ICT enabling them to access the remote work set by teachers and their 'live' sessions in school. The canteen will be available during their break and lunch as normal.

Wherever possible, please provide your son / daughter with headphones to use with our PCs during the lessons. We have some spare headphones for student use, but in the interest of minimising cleaning between users, it would be preferable for students to have their own.

Testing

The Government announced yesterday that students and teachers will have access to mass testing from January. For staff, it potentially means that we will have access to testing, with results available in 30 minutes, on a weekly basis. Similarly, students who are identified as 'close contacts' and required to self-isolate can be tested daily for seven days. 'Close contacts' will be able to stay in school if they test negative. It is important to note that the

test would be optional but be aware that those who do not consent would be required to self-isolate for the current period of 10-days.

The timing and nature of the announcement presents schools with logistical problems:

- How we administer the tests and employ / secure nine staff members to operate the process;
- How we identify / secure a suitable place, with a non-porous floor, where testing can take place;
- How we provide training for staff in administering and tracking the process;
- How we manage a daily process for potentially hundreds of students and staff;
- How we manage 3 hours into the school day where students can socially distance whilst waiting for results. Three testing bays, requiring nine people to operate, will take 3 hours to administer 100 students.

I have no doubt that we will receive further information regarding testing but in the meantime, we will endeavour to find solutions to the potential barriers and support the process, as best we can.

Covid-19 Contact Tracing between 18 and 23 December 2020

As a result of the school being closed, our dates for contact tracing have been adjusted to reflect this

If your son/daughter receives a positive test result for COVID-19, it is important that you alert us by emailing me directly at vmurray@grange.bucks.sch.uk .

Please email me if your son/daughter has received a positive test at any time up to and including Saturday 19 December. Please also email me if they received a positive test after Saturday 19 December but they developed symptoms before Sunday 20 December.

Finally

I am sure that the last nine months have caused and created numerous challenges for you to contend and overcome and this will continue to be the case into 2021. As a school, we are here to serve our community and will be here and do whatever it is that we can, in any small way to help our students and their families through this difficult period. Please let us know if you think that we can help.

This term has seen no end of change to how we have needed to operate. All the decisions that we have made, we have tried to do for the right reasons. Where we may have gotten it wrong, it has always been with the best of intentions.

Throughout this term, we have wanted to retain as much a sense of normality for our students as we can, albeit in a controlled environment. The vaccine and increased testing will enable us to get closer to where we want to be.

I hope that during the course of this break, you can all have a rest and enjoy the company of those closest to you. I look forward to seeing everyone in January and my very best wishes for 2021.

Yours faithfully



Vince Murray
Headteacher