

1 January 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

Headteacher's letter - Return to School, January 2021

Happy New Year to you all! I hope that you all had an enjoyable Christmas, even though it may have been very different to the one you had planned.

Following the Secretary of State's announcement on 30 December 2020, I would just like to update you on what that means for Borlase. It has now been recognised that schools need more time to plan and organise the logistics of setting up mass testing centres on our sites. The government has therefore asked schools to delay the return of students being on site by a week and adopt a phased return to allow all students and staff to be tested. I will set out further information about the testing below.

	Year 11	Year 13	Years 7-10 and 12
4 January	INSET - No lessons	INSET - No lessons	INSET - No lessons
5-8 January	Borlase@Home. Tutor time 8.40, lessons. See below for school day timings.	Borlase@Home. Tutor Time 8.40, explanation of exam timings; revision advice in lessons; teachers will give the option to stay in class and ask questions or revise independently.	Tutor Time 8.40. Guidance set out for independent work for the rest of this week using Google Classroom.
11-15 January	All Year 11 attend school	Year 13 Practice Exams start Monday. Come to school as per Mrs Walder's communications.	Borlase@Home. Tutor Time from 8.40 and all lessons each day through Google Meet. See timings of school day below.

Key Worker/ Vulnerable Pupils School starts from **5 January**. Please email Miss Williams rhwilliams@swbgs.com or parents@ for her attention if you would like your child to attend.

As Buckinghamshire has moved into Tier 4, there are new implications for clinically extremely vulnerable staff and pupils. The government has updated the [guidance on shielding and protecting extremely vulnerable persons from Covid-19](#). Please contact

parents@ FAO Miss Williams and Head of Key Stage/Year if you wish to inform us regarding how this guidance affects your family circumstances.

The Timings of the School Day

The week of 5-8 January will be Week 2A, the week of 11-15 January will be week 2B. The timings of the school day have been adapted to accommodate the fact that some students are working at home and need short breaks to leave their screens and teachers are teaching a combination of students at home and students on the school site.

8.40 -8.55	Tutor Time (Transition and set up Virtual Lesson)
9.10 - 11.25	Lesson 1 and 2 (Break for 30 minutes 10.10 - 10.40)
11.25	BREAK ALL (15 Minutes)
11. 40 - 1.55	Lessons 3 and 4 (Break for 30 minutes 12.40 - 1.10)
1.55	BREAK ALL (15 Minutes)
2.10 - 3.10	Lesson 5

Testing of Students and Staff and Recruiting Staff

The school is setting up a further marquee with testing bays on Colonel's Meadow next week which will be ready by midweek. We are looking for three to four full-time staff to lead the registering of students, test guidance, processing and recording of the tests. We are also looking for additional volunteers on an agreed rota. Thank you if you have already contacted us. However, if you are interested in either of the above, please email Anna Summerfield (HR) asummerfield@swbgs.com to express your interest and share your availability. We would like to confirm these positions by Monday 11 th January. You do not need a medical background; you need to be organised, efficient and comfortable working with young people. None of the roles involve physically testing or swabbing. Do pass this request to friends and if you have older children who may be between phases of study or employment.

Lateral Flow Tests

Schools are being provided with Lateral Flow Testing (LFT) kits in order to test all staff before the students start the term and thereafter on a weekly basis. We are asked to test all students on a regular basis and test the "close contacts" of anyone with a positive PCR Test. The Lateral Flow tests for students will involve either a nose swab or a nose and throat swab; this is to be confirmed on Monday. The students will be trained how to administer the test themselves, looking at videos and with staff demonstration. There would be staff overseeing the tests while they do this. I am attaching the information we have from the Department for Education on the process so that you can consider this and discuss it with your child.

[A government explanatory video about Lateral Flow Testing](#)

[How to do your own lateral flow test swab](#)

[Information for parents and carers from Test and Trace](#)



We are setting up initial testing appointments for all students before they return to school. These will be guided by Matron and staff from school who know the students well, with our new staff training and joining us from the second week of term.

Consent

It is very important that you [complete this consent form](#) when you have read the information above if your child is in Years 7-11. 6th form students will be expected to give consent independently and will be sent a consent form to their school email address.

Draft Testing Schedule (Individual appointments to be confirmed from Monday 4 January when we have a clear understanding of the timings of the process. In your appointment email we explain how to enter and leave school.)

Tuesday 5 January	All staff tested
Wednesday 6 January	Staff training for test support
Thursday 7 January	Year 13 Testing -appointments to come to school and be tested.
Friday 8 January	Year 11 appointments for testing - set work, no lessons for Year 11
Monday 11 January	Year 12 appointments for testing - set work, no lessons for Year 12.
Tuesday 12 January	Year 12 appointments for testing; from 11.30 Year 10 appointments testing - no lesson during test period.
Wednesday 13 January	Year 9 appointments for testing - no lessons during test period.
Thursday 14 January	Year 8 appointments for testing - no lessons during test period.
Friday 15 January	Year 7 appointments for testing - no lessons during test period.

Testing everyone should help us all stay safer as a community, in school and out. However, we will still be insisting on the importance of following the rules on mask-wearing, social distancing, hygiene and ventilation as being even more important during these winter months. We will be permitting the wearing of an additional plain, warm layer on top of uniforms; I will send details in my next communication.

Testing using the LFT takes about 15 minutes; we hope to have six bays operating to make this process slick and minimise disruption to learning. Students and staff will receive the result of their LFT within 30 minutes of the test. If a test result is negative, the student remains in

school. If a test result is positive, parents are informed and the student would need to go home from school and take the more accurate PCR test. We believe we will be issued with home-testing PCR tests with a 24-48 hour turnaround time for the result. If a student is negative following the PCR test they may come into school. If the student is positive, they should follow the previous COVID protocol of self-isolating at home for 10 days and parents would be contacted by matron.

In the event of a student or staff member receiving a PCR-confirmed positive test result we would identify all the “close contacts” of that positive case as before. The new guidance allows us at this point to test the contacts using the LFT test every day for seven days and let them remain in school each day they are negative. However, my leadership team and governors agree that we should, initially at least, continue with the practices that have proven to be safe last term. We are developing our confidence with the LFT process and would like time to assess its reliability as we use it in our setting. At Borlase we will therefore be adopting a more cautious approach. We will ask close contacts to self-isolate as usual for the 10 days and take a PCR test if they are symptomatic. We are able to include students self-isolating in lessons via the virtual classroom and staff will have further training on this next week. Last term we had few cases by being vigilant and cautious and I believe until we understand fully how this new strain may impact on us, this cautious approach would be sensible. This will also improve capacity for us to test all students on a rolling programme. We will review this position after the first month. With the testing of everyone before returning to site, the extended period of self-isolation for home-learning imposed for the weeks of 4-8 and 11-15 January and the regular LFT roll out by year group we will continue to protect our school and wider community.

Please continue to follow the COVID guidance on the website. Do not send your child to school if they are unwell or have any of the COVID symptoms. The symptoms of original strain of COVID are a new cough, a high temperature and loss of taste or smell. However, there is less clarity about the new strain. We therefore recommend you keep your child at home if they feel unwell and contact Matron nday@swbgs.com.

I will contact you again next week with further updates following INSET, and individual Heads of Year and Key Stage will be sharing details with students and parents about Borlase@Home to be sure they are all ready to engage fully. You will also receive a separate email with your child’s test appointment. Please ensure you complete the [consent form](#) as the timeline for this is very tight.

I would like to wish you all again a happy new year. Thank you all for your continued support and help in keeping us all safe.

Best wishes,

Kay Mountfield
Headteacher

