



5 January 2021

Dear Families

No sooner did we think that we had a plan for the next few weeks than we are back to the drawing board! I appreciate how disruptive to your families yesterday's announcement will have been. Whilst a lockdown was somewhat inevitable, I do not underestimate the difficulties this now causes for our students, their families and our local and national community.

Whilst not wanting to overburden you with information, I do think that a degree of reassurance at this point may be helpful. I heard the PM's announcement last night at the same time as you and without any forewarning, so we are rapidly playing 'catch-up' this morning, with partial and imperfect information from our political masters and the Department for Education.

### **School Closure and key worker provision**

School is now closed until **Monday 22 February** at the earliest. We do continue to operate 'mini-school' for vulnerable children, those of key workers and children with significant additional needs. If you are a key worker and require your child/ren to attend school, please complete the request form [HERE](#), even if your children are currently attending, please can I ask that you complete the form. I must stress that parents should only send their child to school if there is no safe alternative. Parents will need to be in one of the categories mentioned [here](#) and will need to commit to their child's attendance at school for full school days. If you are requesting a mini-school place, please ensure that you have completed the Covid testing consent form [here](#) if you have not already done so.

Mr Bishop, Deputy Head has written separately to the families of key worker children who are already attending. Children in mini-school have been tested for Covid and are then completing their daily lessons in front of a computer in the same way as those children at home. The education being experienced within school is not glamorous and children learning remotely from home should not feel they are being short-changed compared to their peers in school.

Those students who qualify for free school meals will be receiving vouchers shortly via email, as happened in the first lockdown. Families experiencing any financial difficulties should not hesitate to contact the school.

### **Mass Testing**

Over the last 24-hours we have tested 164 staff and students using the lateral flow tests previously referred to. No test has proved positive. Testing was smooth and efficient thanks to the staff involved and children have responded well and without fuss. I anticipate that such testing will form part of the pathway back to a return to school. Our Facebook page illustrates the test centre and some of the remote learning that happened yesterday and is well worth following.

### **Remote Learning**

Feedback from parents yesterday, indicates that our remote learning package has improved since the first lockdown. Extensive in-house training has undoubtedly helped improve the quality of what is on offer. I am acutely aware, however, of some families having difficulties logging on due to connection issues, hardware deficiencies, forgotten passwords etc. Our ICT specialists have been tasked with helping to solve these niggles to ensure all students can access work effectively. Another 40 Google Chromebooks are expected in school this week to supplement those previously received and these will be loaned out in due course to families without computers.

Ashchurch Road, Tewkesbury  
Gloucestershire GL20 8DF

Reception: **01684 292152**  
Attendance Line: **01684 851806**

Email: **office@tewkesburyschool.org**  
Website: **www.tewkesburyschool.org**

Headteacher: **Mr G M Watson** BSc PGDip NPQH

Daily registers are being taken of children attending lessons and teachers are routinely keeping a record of those children engaging with remote learning and those choosing to absent themselves. Non-engagement of students will be followed up by our pastoral team. I look forward to issuing more certificates and badges to those students engaging particularly well as was the case last spring. The quality of work being set by teachers is also being monitored on a regular basis by subject leaders and senior staff. Nothing can replicate the in-school experience for children but we are doing the best we can under the circumstances. In the absence of Covid, no teacher would choose to deliver a lesson to 25 teenagers over the internet rather than see those children in a classroom and we all crave a safe return to school at the earliest safe opportunity.

### **Examinations**

It is in this area that I feel the most exposed with no more knowledge than yourselves. GCSE, A Level and BTEC students will be in shock and anxious to understand what 'alternative arrangements' actually means for them this summer. We are currently led to believe that BTEC exams scheduled for January will still be going ahead. BTEC students are advised to continue to engage directly with their subject teacher.

It **may** be the case that centre assessed grades are used this summer as happened last year. In simple terms, these are moderated teacher predictions used to generate the equivalent of exam grades.

Thankfully, and unlike many schools, all our Y11 and Y13 students have already completed their first set of mock examinations last term. That gives us one piece of robust evidence to help inform potential grades in the summer. In the absence of more detailed information, it is now our intention to push back our second set of mocks, originally planned for March to the summer term. These internal examinations are likely to be even more critical, should formal external examinations not take place as currently seems likely.

All Y11 and Y13 students, therefore, **MUST** continue to study and participate fully in online learning to put themselves in the best possible position in relation to their teacher assessments and, by implication, their final grades.

### **Please direct any queries as follows**


General Remote Learning  
Mini School  
Exams and Assessment  
Sixth Form

Deputy Head - [clare.deglanville@tewkesburyschool.org](mailto:clare.deglanville@tewkesburyschool.org)  
Deputy Head - [david.bishop@tewkesburyschool.org](mailto:david.bishop@tewkesburyschool.org)  
Deputy Head - [rhus.adams@tewkesburyschool.org](mailto:rhus.adams@tewkesburyschool.org)  
Y12 [rachael.waters@tewkesburyschool.org](mailto:rachael.waters@tewkesburyschool.org)  
Y13 [chris.thomson@tewkesbury school.org](mailto:chris.thomson@tewkesbury school.org)  
SENDCO - [nick.collins@tewkesburyschool.org](mailto:nick.collins@tewkesburyschool.org)  
Please direct to your child's subject teacher  
Please direct to your child's tutor or Head of House

Special Needs  
Subject specific queries  
Pastoral/Welfare Issues

Thank you for your continued support. Please do not hesitate to contact us if we can be of assistance.

With very best wishes



**Mr G M Watson**  
**Headteacher**