



Mr G Panayiotou – Headteacher
Mr John McNichol – Chair of Governors

Castleford Academy
Ferrybridge Road
Castleford
WF10 4JQ
Tel: (01977) 605060

Our Ref: GP/NF

18th December 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

The Department for Education announced yesterday that there will be a staggered return to school for pupils of secondary school age. This means that pupils in **Year 11 and Year 13 return** to school as normal on **Tuesday 5th January 2021**. Pupils in **Years 7, 8, 9, 10 and 12 remain at home** and access remote learning for the first week of term. This is because the government have recognised that, due to increased mixing of household over Christmas, additional measures might be necessary in the New Year to help slow the spread of the virus. Schools have been asked to potentially carry out optional rapid Covid -19 testing for pupils and staff in January. The staggered start will help give schools time to prepare to administer the tests. We will write to you in January if you want to take up this offer.

When will my child return to school?

Pupils in **Year 11 and Year 13 will return to school on Tuesday 5th January 2021** as normal whilst pupils in **Year 7, 8, 9, 10 and 12 remain at home** and access remote learning for the first week of term. All pupils will return to school on Monday 11th January. We are asking that pupils who study **Health and Social Care in Year 12 also return on Tuesday 5th January** to work towards their examined unit.

What if my child has an exam?

All of scheduled external BTEC examinations will take place as planned that week for Year 11 and Year 12. We have taken the decision to move the Year 8 exams to the w/c 18th January.

What work should my child complete?

Pupils in Years 7, 8, 9, 10 and 12 should aim to follow their timetable for that week and access the learning resources and remote lesson links available on **Show My Homework** and complete the work set. Additional work can be found on the remote learning section on the academy website and is broken down by year group.

What do I do if my child does not have a device to complete work?

If your child needs a device to complete work or data to enable internet access, please contact admin@castlefordacademy.com with your child's name, form and device requirements so that we can arrange for this to be collected in January.

Vulnerable Pupils and childcare for key workers.

If you are a critical worker who needs childcare that week, please complete the form below to request a childcare place. **Please note that pupils in Year 7, 8, 9, 10 and 12 will not be attending lessons that week but computer**

access (in year group bubbles) will be made available for them to access remote learning in school. Pupils accessing childcare would need to attend all week for normal school hours. Parents/carers of vulnerable pupils will be contacted by academy staff on the 4th January to confirm their childcare place.

<http://b.link/tbqd8>

What is rapid testing?

Rapid testing involves using a lateral flow test on a regular basis to assess if a person has coronavirus. It is not as accurate as the PCR tests completed by the NHS but it does give results within 30 minutes.

When and how will this take place in school?

The government announced this week that rapid testing kits would be distributed to schools and colleges in January. We are currently working with the Public Health team in Wakefield to ensure that any testing system is implemented in a safe and coherent manner.

Do I need to give consent for my child to be tested?

Rapid testing will be optional and it would need to be authorised by parents/carers before any pupil is tested. In order to obtain consent, we are aware that parents need as much information as possible about the test. This is something that we will be able to share with you in the New Year when we have more information.

Why is there a staggered start to the year?

Although the tests produce results quickly, there are a number of steps that need to be in place to ensure that they are safe and accurate. The DfE recognise that schools have never undertaken anything like this before and that schools need time to set up the systems and processes necessary to administer the tests.

We apologise for the last minute nature of this change to the start of term however, we were only made aware of the changes after school had closed on Thursday 17th December. We are still awaiting updates from the DfE regarding the processes for rapid testing so are unable to share more information with you at this time. We will contact you in the New Year with more details.

We wish you and your family a safe and happy Christmas.

Yours faithfully



Mr G Panayiotou
Headteacher

Yours faithfully



Mrs D Cook
Associate Headteacher

