



ULVERSTON VICTORIA HIGH SCHOOL



Springfield Road, Ulverston, Cumbria LA12 0EB

Telephone: 01229 483900

Web: www.uvhs.uk E-mail: uvhs@uvhs.uk

Headteacher: Mr Matthew Hardwick B.A. (Hons), N.P.Q.H.

Deputy Headteachers: Mrs Susan Hewson B.A. (Hons), N.P.Q.H., Mrs Alessandra Desbottes M.A. (Oxon)

Our Ref: MHa/AJH

An exceptional school at the heart of the community

18th December 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

I had hoped that my communication to you last Friday, with its message of celebration for what our school community has achieved over the last term, would be my last for 2020. However, the government's last minute announcement yesterday concerning the obligation for schools to offer flow testing to all students in the New Year, has altered the way we will have to restart in the New Year. We have been told that we should:

- Have Year 11 and 13 in school during the first week back.
- Arrange to offer testing for all children, starting with vulnerable children and Years 11 and 13.
- Provide remote education for other children during the first week of term.

Whilst testing is clearly a very positive way of controlling the spread, this particular test is only effective when done in a very well planned and regulated manner. Therefore, we will need time to plan, recruit staff, obtain consent from parents and again physically rearrange the school. The timing of the government announcement is therefore not exactly ideal. Like always at UVHS we strive to do things in the best interests of our school community, therefore we have made the following decisions after much angst.

1. We introduce testing as soon as is practicable, safe and effective.
2. The government has suggested that we convert the first day back after Christmas, the 4th January, to an INSET day to enable planning to take place. We believe that this is necessary as much of the work we will have to do in preparation cannot be done with the country closed for Christmas. **Therefore, the school will be closed to all children on Monday 4th January.**
3. **From Tuesday 5th January**, we will be open for:
 - a. Year 11 and 13.
 - b. Vulnerable students who require childcare. I have attached the criteria for this at the end of this letter and there is an online form to complete in the same way as in the summer term. Please see the following link to access the form:
<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=HiLfe0d0jEqu0l2FaH5XWvdQcK-WyChNpyvF-P0npyBUMDVTWdJMME1QSTRaMkhOSTQ3WEJYVlIUy4u>
 - c. Children of Key Workers.
4. **All other year groups will be taught online**, through Teams, from Tuesday 5th January until Friday 8th January and return to school on **Monday 11th January**.
5. We will ask parents to complete a consent form if they wish their child to take part in the tests with another covering letter in the New Year.

We had hoped to give Year 13 study leave, to prevent the possibility of infection in the week before their mocks causing the year group to self-isolate. The mocks being particularly important this year in case the government does a U-turn over exams and evidence is required for centre assessed grades. However, the government guidance issued yesterday is very clear that Year 13 should be in school.



ULVERSTON VICTORIA HIGH SCHOOL



Springfield Road, Ulverston, Cumbria LA12 0EB

Telephone: 01229 483900

Web: www.uvhs.uk E-mail: uvhs@uvhs.uk

Headteacher: Mr Matthew Hardwick B.A. (Hons), N.P.Q.H.

Deputy Headteachers: Mrs Susan Hewson B.A. (Hons), N.P.Q.H., Mrs Alessandra Desbottes M.A. (Oxon)

Our Ref:

An exceptional school at the heart of the community

The government has yet to publish its operational manual and we are therefore very much in the dark as to how the testing will be carried out and by whom. The decisions we have made so far are predicated on the guidance published yesterday evening:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/schools-and-childcare-settings-return-in-january-2021/schools-and-childcare-settings-return-in-january-2021>

Therefore, I am expecting that there will be changes from what I have said in this letter and I will have to communicate with you again before the start of term. It is not inconceivable that the government may drastically alter or even renege on the whole idea once they receive feedback from people on the ground who have a clearer idea as to what the challenges are.

I am sorry that this letter is so general, however I think it is important to answer your initial questions and tell you what we know at this stage, and give you as much notice as possible as to what term may look like and how we are planning to meet the government's latest expectations.

Merry Christmas, and let us hope that 2021 is a good year.

Mr M Hardwick
Headteacher

Appendix

Vulnerable children and young people include those who:

- are assessed as being in need under section 17 of the Children Act 1989, including children and young people who have a child in need plan, a child protection plan or who are a looked-after child
- have an education, health and care (EHC) plan
- have been identified as otherwise vulnerable by educational providers or local authorities (including children's social care services), and who could therefore benefit from continued full-time attendance, this might include:
 - children and young people on the edge of receiving support from children's social care services or in the process of being referred to children's services
 - adopted children or children on a special guardianship order
 - those at risk of becoming NEET ('not in employment, education or training')
 - those living in temporary accommodation
 - those who are young carers
 - those who may have difficulty engaging with remote education at home (for example, due to a lack of devices or quiet space to study)
 - care leavers
- other children and young people at the provider and local authority's discretion including pupils who need to attend to receive support or manage risks to their mental health