

Update 1.1.21

Dear Parents/Carers,

Following Wednesday's [announcement](#) from the Secretary of State for Education regarding changes to the start of the spring term, school leaders received a further communication on Wednesday night. This stated that:

“during the first week of term, beginning on or just after 4 January, secondary schools and colleges will focus on the rollout of testing to help find asymptomatic cases. They will provide face-to-face education for vulnerable children and the [children of critical workers](#), and prioritise resources for remote education for exam year groups in line with what they would receive in class and **to all other years as resources permit.**”

Despite the ambiguity of the DfE's expectations for the provision of education for non-examination year groups, alongside the fact that I do not expect teachers to be setting up mass testing, I can confirm that Ilkley Grammar School will be providing remote education for all year groups from Tuesday 5th January 2021. Therefore, the schedule for the first two weeks of the spring term is as follows:

Monday 4th January:

- Training day – school closed for all students

Tuesday 5th – Friday 8th January (week A)

- Remote education for all year groups 7-13
- Only vulnerable children and children of key workers will be on site accessing remote education from 8.30am in line with their peers (school will be open from 8am). Further details will be sent on Monday 4th January to those parents/carers who have indicated that they require a place. Students accessing on-site supervision should bring a packed lunch every day this week, unless they are eligible for Free School Meals in which case lunch will be provided.
- [Scheduled external vocational exams for Health and Social Care on Friday 8th January will go ahead on site as planned](#)

Week commencing 11 January (week B):

- Vulnerable children, children of key workers and all students in years 11 and 13 will be on site
- Year 11 mocks commence, starting with all exams originally scheduled to take place this week. Year 11 students will be in normal lessons if they do not have an exam, as study leave is only allowed legally for students in compulsory education once public examinations commence at the end of May.
- Remote education will be provided for all other students in years 7-10 and year 12

Week commencing 18 January (week A):

- All students will be on site for face-to-face teaching
- Year 11 mocks continue with the exams which were originally timetabled for the week commencing 4th January

Remote Education:

As previously communicated, from Tuesday 5th January 2021, lessons or part of a lesson will be delivered via Teams in line with students' timetables. Tutors will also check in with students in all years 7-11 at 8.30am every day. Lesson resources and scaffolds to support students will continue to

be uploaded onto Showbie where students will complete work and, as appropriate, receive feedback; in a small number of lessons, resources may be sent by email.

Students will receive an invite to Teams either in advance of the lesson or at the start (allowing for time for the teacher to set up) so students can connect easily to the call.

Unless a teacher is absent or undergoing testing on site, lessons will endeavour to start via Teams to set out the learning goals. **Please note, live lessons will not necessarily be for the full period; sometimes, the live element/s will be the introduction of new content, more detailed explanations, modelling by the teacher or giving feedback, with students at other points in the lesson working independently on set learning tasks.** During the lesson, the Teams channel can be used for students to ask questions and for teachers to deliver live feedback and support students with misconceptions.

Given the proximity of year 11 mock examinations, many year 11 lessons in the first week will be revision based with live expositions from the teacher, support online during the lesson, alongside structured independent revision tasks.

Just a further reminder that there are some timetable changes which have taken place in advance of the new term; these should now be showing on students' outlook calendars and any paper copies printed last term should be amended. Remote and on-site provision will be delivered in line with these changes:

- The previous Thursday A period 1 has swapped with the previous Thursday A period 4
- The previous Thursday A period 2 has swapped with the previous Thursday A period 3
- The previous Tuesday B period 1 has swapped with the previous Tuesday B lesson 3
- The previous Tuesday B period 2 has swapped with the previous Tuesday B lesson 4.

NB: In the event of teacher absence, resources for learning will be provided but there is unlikely to be a live component to the lessons.

Testing Arrangements:

The government has revised the staggered start for students from what was published just before the Christmas holidays to "allow more time so that every school and college is able to fully roll out mass testing of all staff and students". The expectation is that in the week commencing 4th January schools "will prepare to test as many staff and students as possible" and that the following week, testing "will begin in earnest", prioritising staff, students on site and exam cohorts.

Whilst we remain committed to doing what we can to support the cessation of chains of transmission and to keeping education provision open, we continue to be concerned as to the feasibility of setting up and implementing a mass testing programme on the scale envisaged by the government, and in the timescales currently suggested. In the pilot schools, mass testing was delivered by those who are experts in setting up medical facilities, the armed forces and health professionals, whereas the government plans in their current form place responsibility on senior leaders and require recruitment of a team of volunteers. Given that the ready reckoner published just before Christmas suggests that Ilkley Grammar School will require at least 25 staff to deliver mass testing, the workforce implications are considerable, alongside other logistical challenges. I will write again once we return to school requesting support from volunteers, particularly those who have a medical or care background and a current DBS, to help us ascertain whether we are able to set up and administer mass testing safely and to determine the timescales we believe are deliverable in our context.

We understand that school will receive an initial delivery of up to 1000 lateral flow device test kits and PPE on Monday 4th January, with three training webinars delivered to schools on Monday 4th and Tuesday 5th. We will continue to keep you updated.

Sincere apologies for intruding on your family time again, but I wanted to be able to provide some clarification at a time of continued uncertainty.

I wish you all a very happy New Year.

Best Wishes,

Carly Purnell
Headteacher