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31st December 2020

**IMPORTANT INFORMATION – Updated changes to start of the new term in January 2021**

Dear Parent/Carer,

Apologies that I am writing to you again within the school holidays but you will probably have seen or read the news stories this week about updated changes to the opening of schools in January. Schools and colleges being asked to implement a different phased start to the spring term than we previously planned, and being asked to set up a mass Covid testing programme for students and staff from when schools are open. I am writing to you today to explain how Tile Cross Academy intends to respond to these new extremely last-minute government requests.

As a school we will follow the government guidance on how to phase the start of term, which is intended to ensure effective education can continue but also reduce the spread of the virus as students and staff return after Christmas. This means the following:

#### Updated Phased Start to Term

- On **Monday 4<sup>th</sup> January 2021** Tile Cross Academy will remain **closed** to all students.
- Students in **Year 11** will now be expected to return to school as normal on **Monday 11<sup>th</sup> January 2021**. Lessons for Year 11 students will operate as normal from this date and it is important that students attend school to continue working with their teachers, face to face, in preparation for their summer exams. **We will be providing remote education for all Year 11 students in the form of assignments and Podcasts through Microsoft Teams from Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> January 2021**. A reminder regarding our plans for remote learning will be sent to families as soon as the new term begins. **It is an expectation that students in Years 11 engage in this work on a daily basis.**
- Students who are identified by the government as being vulnerable or who have a parent as a key worker will still have the opportunity attend school as normal from **Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> January 2021**. An attempt will be made to offer provision for each child **but to support with safety** students must attend for the full two weeks of schooling and will not be allowed to select which day they attend. These students will form a new bubble for this first two weeks of term and will work across year groups to access their remote learning in school. **To secure a place within this group** please contact our Tile Cross Academy e-mail address by **Monday 4<sup>th</sup> January 2021** at the latest at [enquiry@tilecross.academy](mailto:enquiry@tilecross.academy) **It is vital we know which students will be attending school from these groups so we can plan and prepare for the week.**
- Any students who are due to sit external exams on the first two weeks back, and who are not in Year 11, will still be invited into school. Contact with these students will be made directly to agree arrangements and timings of each exam.
- During this first **two** weeks of term, all pupils in Years 7, 8, 9 and 10 should now stay at home. **We will be providing remote education for all students in Years 7, 8, 9 & 10 from Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> January 2021**. Links to Oak learning lessons will be accessible from **Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> January 2021** from our website and assignments and podcasts developed by their teachers will be available through Microsoft Teams from **Monday 11<sup>th</sup> January 2021**. A reminder regarding our plans for remote learning will be sent to families as soon as the new term begins. **It is an expectation that students in Years 7 - 10 engage in this work on a daily basis.**
- **From Monday 18<sup>th</sup> January 2021, all students should return to school as normal. If this date changes we will keep you informed.**

Please remember if students have been away from the country over the Christmas break then they must self-isolate on their return as per Government guidance. Please follow this link for advice on travel and self-isolation from foreign countries. [Travel advice](#).

**Remember:** In the New Year students must continue to stay at home and self-isolate if they, or anyone else in their household, is showing any symptoms that relate to the COVID 19 virus.



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These include either:

- a high temperature – you feel hot to touch on your chest or back
- a new, continuous cough – this means you've started coughing repeatedly
- loss of sense of taste and/or smell

Please ring the school immediately to inform us if your child is absent for this reason. Please make sure that you leave your child's name if you get put through to our voicemail.

**It is vital we continue to work together over the coming months to protect our whole school community.**

### Mass testing programme

We are positive about the potential for the mass testing of pupils and staff in schools, as a way of reducing the spread of the virus and enabling fewer pupils and staff to have to self-isolate. You can read more about how the government expects this programme to work [here](#).

Setting up this programme in schools is an incredibly complex operation. We have been sent some information about how it should work already, but more detailed guidance is expected to be produced by the government over the Christmas holiday period.

We will not, therefore, be in position to have this programme up and running as soon as the spring term starts. At the start of term, we will review what the expectations are, what support is available from the government or other agencies, and what we can realistically deliver.

We will let you know more about our plans as soon as we can in January. In the meantime, from the start of next term, we will continue to implement the safety measures we have been using in the autumn term.

**Please accept our apologies for having to send this letter out towards the end of the holidays. We are having to respond to a vast quantity of extremely last minute and complex government guidance.**

**Thank you for your patience and all best wishes for a safe and enjoyable New Year.**

Regards,

Mr P. Marano  
 Headteacher