

Dear parents,

I trust your children are now enjoying a good rest.

I am sorry to have to write after the end of Term, but before we head into Christmas, I should highlight that in the last few days there have been a number of government announcements which are likely to affect us. Much has been said in the press about schools being asked to implement a phased start to the Spring Term and setting up a mass testing programme for pupils and staff. We will follow the government guidance on this to ensure effective education can continue but also reduce the spread of the virus as pupils and staff return. This means the following:

### **Phased start to the Spring Term**

The guidance that has been published expects the Junior School still to be open. However, only Senior School pupils in public exam years, children of 'critical' workers (we are awaiting the definition of this, and whether it is the same as the 'keyworker' criteria used in the Summer) and vulnerable children are likely to return in person at the beginning of Term. We will communicate more detail on this in the New Year when we hope to have more clarification, so that it is clear whether your child will fall in to one of these categories.

During the first week of term all other pupils should stay at home. This means that the vast majority of Years 7 to 10 and Y12 would be expected to start the first week of term being taught remotely. From Monday the 11th of January all pupils should expect to come into school as normal.

We are of course, in the hands of Government guidance but I wanted to share this likelihood to give as much advance notice as possible.

### **Mass testing**

Setting up this programme in schools will be a complex operation and, as yet, we do not have enough information to be able to comment on how this will work in practice. We expect more detail being published over the Christmas period and will review what the expectations are, what support is available and what we can realistically deliver. However, as it stands, we do not anticipate being in a position to have this testing programme in place for the beginning of term.

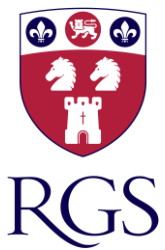
I should note that this testing would be optional but we would need parental consent to administer these tests for children under 16. Those over 16 will be able to provide consent themselves. Again, we will be in touch when we have clarity on this. In the meantime, we will continue to implement the safety measures that we have developed over the course of the Autumn term.

I shall aim to provide an update on our plans early in the New Year. In the meantime, thank you for your patience and all best wishes for a safe and enjoyable holiday.

**Geoffrey Stanford**

---

Royal Grammar School, Eskdale Terrace, Newcastle upon Tyne NE2 4DX  
T: 0191 281 5711 E: [communications@rgs.newcastle.sch.uk](mailto:communications@rgs.newcastle.sch.uk) [www.rgs.newcastle.sch.uk](http://www.rgs.newcastle.sch.uk)



Headmaster

---

Royal Grammar School, Eskdale Terrace, Newcastle upon Tyne NE2 4DX  
T: 0191 281 5711 E: [communications@rgs.newcastle.sch.uk](mailto:communications@rgs.newcastle.sch.uk) [www.rgs.newcastle.sch.uk](http://www.rgs.newcastle.sch.uk)

The Newcastle upon Tyne Royal Grammar School is a charitable company registered in England and Wales No. 5664801  
Registered Charity No. 1114424 Registered address: Eskdale Terrace, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE2 4DX