

Dear parents

I appreciate that the recent weeks will have been a challenging time for many of you. However, I hope that you and your children have stayed healthy, been able to rest and enjoyed spending some time together over the Christmas period.

### **Latest plans for the phased return to school**

Following yesterday's announcement by the Education Secretary about the latest plans for the phased return of schools, I am writing to confirm that, following this guidance:

#### ***Junior School***

Even though we are now in Tier 4, the Junior School are currently expected to be able to start in school as of the beginning of term on the 7th of January.

#### ***Senior School***

We anticipate starting the term for all Senior School year groups remotely, from the 7th of January. The current expectation is that Y11 and Y13 will be allowed to return to school in person on the 11th of January and all other years will be able to return on the 18th of January.

As with the previous lockdown in the summer, children of critical workers in Y7, Y8 and Y9 as well as those who are vulnerable in Y7 to Y13 may be supervised in school from the beginning of term, logging in to the same lessons as those working remotely from home. If your child is eligible and you anticipate them needing to be in school, please let us know by completing this [form](#).

These arrangements do remain subject to the Government's ongoing review of their contingency framework. As and when pupils do return to school, we anticipate continuing to operate under the same strict measures to reduce transmission as were in place last term.

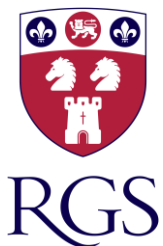
In all of the above, I would much prefer that children were able to be taught in school and I very much look forward to seeing all our students in school as soon as they are allowed.

### **Mass testing programme**

Meanwhile, we are developing plans to implement to Government's request to offer mass testing in the Senior School. These tests aim to help find asymptomatic cases and then provide daily testing of those identified as a close contact, thereby reducing the need for self-isolation. These tests will be optional, requiring parental consent for those under 16, while those over 16 can provide consent themselves. The government guidance encourages all students and staff to consent to testing.

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The tests themselves are being provided free of charge to all schools by the government but, at the moment, we do not anticipate that the government will provide any support for independent schools to administer the testing regime, even though the number of people required to deliver a successful testing centre is considerable. To that end, I would much appreciate hearing [on this form](#) from anyone who can volunteer their time if that should prove necessary and I am very grateful for those who have already proactively made contact offering to help.

### **Looking ahead**

I anticipate writing again next week with more information and we shall do our best to keep you updated as the situation develops. In the meantime, I hope that all of you are able to find an appropriate way to celebrate the arrival of the New Year. While the coming months are likely to continue to be challenging, I remain confident that there is much to look forward to.

Yours sincerely

**Geoffrey Stanford**  
Headmaster