

3rd January 2021

Dear Parents/ Carers,

I am writing to you again this evening to update you on plans for the return to school in January 2021. Since school finished on 18th December 2020, a great deal has changed given the rising incidence of Covid 19 rates and the new strain of the virus. As I explained in my previous communication, the Department for Education has asked schools to follow the staggered return to school in January rather than welcome all children back on the 5th January 2021 as we had hoped, in order to protect our children and protect their education and well-being. The arrangements for the return to school in January has now changed for all middle and secondary schools in England. The logistics of changing plans at this stage are challenging for any school and I appreciate that this is also the case for parents and carers. However, it is important that we comply with instructions laid out by the Department for Education and so the start of the new term will be as follows:

Monday 4 January 2021: INSET Day – no children in school

**Tuesday 5 January- Friday 15th January 2021: Years 5 and 6 in school & Years 7-8 taught remotely
Children of critical workers and vulnerable children in KS3, in school, with parental permission, will be tested week commencing 11th January 2021.**

New Staggered Timings for KS2 and KS3 in 2021

As a result of separate school entrances for children in KS2 and KS3, it has been possible to revise the start of day and end of day timings, whilst simultaneously ensuring that children stay in their year hubs. The revised timings are as follows:

Year	Morning Drop off Time	End of Day Pick Up Time
5	08.15	15.15
6	08.25	15.25
7	08.25	15.25
8	08.35	15.35

Monday 18th January- All year groups return to school, all children with parental permission, will be tested upon return.

To support advanced planning, I would like to collate the following information from parents/ carers in **all** year groups in the event that the Government makes any further changes to the education system in the near future. I am committed to ensuring a calm and considered response is taken in this ever changing landscape, to support our children's transitions, underpinned by guidance from Public Health England, Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE): Coronavirus, and the Department for Education (DfE).

- If either parent or carer of a child in Year 5 or 6, falls into one of the following categories (see, categories in bold font below), please can you email the office team on: office@westmoorsmid.dorset.sch.uk
- If either parent or carer of a child in Year 7 or Year 8 falls into one of these categories, and you would like your child to attend school on any of the days from Tuesday 5th January 2021 to Friday 15th January 2021, please email: office@westmoorsmid.dorset.sch.uk. Days/ sessions for your child may be booked by no later than 16.00 on Monday 4th January 2021. You can also use this email address to cancel sessions if your plans change.

Children of critical workers

The government has updated its guidance about which groups of people who are considered to be critical workers as follows:

- Health & Social care workers – doctors, nurses, midwives, paramedics, social workers, care workers, other frontline health and social care staff, supply chain staff, producers and distributor of medicines and medical and personal protective equipment
- Education and childcare - teachers/school support staff and childcare staff, specialist educational professionals, social workers
- Key public services – justice system, religious staff, charities and workers delivering frontline services, those responsible for the management of deceased, journalists and broadcasters
- Local and national government – administration involved in the COVID-19 response or those delivering essential public services.

- Food and other necessary goods – food production, processing, distribution, sale and delivery and other key goods, for example hygienic and veterinary medicines
- Public safety and national security – police and support staff, MoD civilians, contractor and armed forces personnel critical to the COVID-19 pandemic, fire and rescue staff, National Crime Agency staff, border security, prison and probation staff and other national security roles
- Transport – people keeping air, water, road and rail passenger and freight transport operating, including supply chains
- Utilities, communication and financial services – banks, building societies, financial market infrastructure, oil, gas, electricity and water/sewerage, information technology and data, nuclear, chemical, telecommunications, postal service, payment providers and waste disposal sectors.

Children who fall into the vulnerable category

The government definitions for children in this category are 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

In KS3, we plan to test your child for Covid-19 upon return to school using the lateral flow testing devices. **This is voluntary and relies upon your consent.** However, in order to keep both the staff and other children in our school community safe, in the face of rising numbers of the virus, please can I urge you to consent to testing week commencing 11th January 2021 for children in KS3 on site as they fall into one of the categories highlighted in bold font above. A consent form will be sent out to parents/ carers of children in KS3, this week.

Testing in school

We have been given Public Health England and DfE consent to train staff to use the Lateral Flow Devices that will be delivered to the school on Monday 4th January 2021. Next week will be spent planning to ensure that the testing area is completely fit for purpose and that our staff are trained. We will use the Lateral Flow Testing devices to test everyone who has consent from their parent/ carer and children will be given their test slot by their tutor during registration.

Remote Learning

Children in KS3 will continue their learning remotely via our VLE from Tuesday 5th January 2021 and Mrs Watkins, our school's Assistant Headteacher for Curriculum, will be sending out a detailed letter tomorrow. Live lessons will be provided in core subjects via Microsoft Teams and children will need access to a device with Microsoft Teams on it (e.g. computer / laptop/ tablet / smartphone). They will follow their usual school timetable and should be present on Microsoft Teams for registration each morning with lessons either live or via Assignments in Course subjects. Your child's teachers will communicate this to them.

Illness and absence

If your child is unwell, even when learning from home remotely, please report absence in the normal way by contacting the school: **covid@westmoorsmid.dorset.sch.uk**. If your child is exhibiting any symptoms of COVID-19, it is critical that they do not attend school. Instead, please book a COVID-19 test at one of the regional testing centres. Similarly, if any household member is exhibiting any symptoms of COVID-19, it is vital that your child does not attend school until the household member has a confirmed negative test result.

We will continue to update you with information as it emerges – this is a rapidly moving situation and there may well be further changes and updates in the coming days as we respond to national decisions.

Thank you for your continued support- we will get through this, together.

Warmest Regards,



Dr Deborah Craddock
Headteacher

