



4th January 2021

Dear Parents and carers,

I must apologise for the lateness in advising you that we will not be open to all students until January 11th 2021. Since closing school for the holidays, we have all heard the news of increasing infection rates coupled with a new strain of the virus which is more infectious for everyone, especially children. We have also had a lot of guidance coming from the DfE on a daily basis and the date of January 11th may indeed change again with this in mind I have enclosed a learning pack.

We were informed that schools with secondary age students would have access to testing for both staff and students in January and last week further information was released by the Government. We are due to receive our tests this week and this means that we have to set up a 'test centre' in school to very specific criteria and ensure the safe testing of over 50 members of the team in the first instance. We will also need to plan for 'mass' testing of students.

I hope that knowing that all the staff are being tested will give you more confidence to support your child to return to the school for their education. Staff will be tested weekly and the most important function of this is to try to identify people who have an asymptomatic infection. Many people have no idea that they have caught COVID 19 and so may risk spreading the infection unknowingly. I know that all our team work very hard to stay healthy themselves in order to protect your children. This will be another way we can work together to protect your children and each other.

We already know how difficult many of our students find many medical procedures, but we will be training a small dedicated team lead by myself to offer regular testing to all students. I have enclosed information sheets and a consent form should you decide that you want your child regularly tested - *testing is voluntary*.

We may still have to continue to use the bubble closures if this is necessary with learning packs for the 10 day isolation period. I am hopeful that the routine testing of staff and your consent to test your child will ensure we can have more continuity in learning next term, along with everyone sensibly staying away from school if they are unwell.

I know that all of these changing aspects of the pandemic will be concerning to many of you and I would ask that you get in touch with either myself or Mrs Marchand Smith for KS3 or Mr Stephenson for KS4 if you have any concerns you would like to talk over. I can also be contacted on sjordan@bgcfl.org.uk if email is easier.

We will regularly update the website if anything changes so please check the Information tab – COVID 19 updates and the news page. We will also text you on the current number we hold for you.

Thank you again for your support and understanding at this incredibly challenging time. We are as always here should you need to have a chat or discuss any concerns you may have.

Yours sincerely,

Sara Jordan