

3<sup>rd</sup> January 2021

Dear parents, pupils and carers,

Firstly, let me wish everyone connected with KLA a happy and healthy new year! For many reasons it will be another crucial one for KLA, and I look forward to continuing to work as closely and positively with our community as we can throughout the months to come – I am sure we all share hope for a much brighter year.

It is already clear though, that 2021 begins as 2020 ended – with many challenges for us collectively to overcome. I promised I would write to everyone at the start of the new term in January to provide an update, following the announcements that were made on the last day of the last term. I suspect that, like me, you will have been following the situation unfold in the media over the last week or so with increasing concern and confusion!

I have deliberately held off from writing to you before now as the speed at which plans are changing seems to increase all the time and I wanted above all to have our plans clear, avoiding as far as possible the need to issue repeated letters with multiple further changes. That I have been able to do so has only been made possible by your continued patience. I know most heads' email inboxes are much fuller than mine at the moment with parental questions, so I thank you for your confidence and patience throughout these past few confusing days.

So, following the changes and headlines, here is the simplest summary I can provide for everyone of the KLA approach from tomorrow!

**Monday, January 4<sup>th</sup> 2021**

As originally scheduled, tomorrow remains a designated staff training day, and KLA will be closed to all pupils. (That was a very handy piece of scheduling!)

**Tuesday, January 5<sup>th</sup> – Friday, January 8<sup>th</sup> 2021**

Following the government announcement of 30<sup>th</sup> December, **all pupils, including those in Year 11** are now asked to **work at home** for this week. We will provide remote learning for all pupils throughout these four days. This will be mostly in the form of live-streamed Teams sessions or video recorded lessons, so that we can provide education for all pupils at the highest level possible in the

circumstances. I will provide more information tomorrow once we have had a chance to plan in full detail with all faculty leaders and staff.

### **Monday, January 11<sup>th</sup> – Friday January 15<sup>th</sup> 2021**

Current government guidance is for pupils **in Year 11 only** to return to school on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> Jan, while all pupils **in Years 7, 8, 9, and 10 continue to learn at home remotely**. This is the current information that we have, although it is entirely possible that this guidance may change in the coming days. If it does, I will of course be in touch to let you know.

The current guidance also expects that all pupils should return to school from Monday, 18<sup>th</sup> January. Again, if there is any change to this expectation I will let all parents know as quickly as I can. I certainly wouldn't be betting against further changes given the current situation!

### **Vulnerable Pupils and those from critical worker families**

As already shared, we will be open from Tuesday to provide care for all vulnerable pupils (i.e. those with an EHCP, those with social worker support, those pupils in Forward Step and those in CUB in Year 7 and Year 8) every day during this latest school closure. In addition, we will be able to provide care for those pupils whose parents are deemed to be 'critical workers' (e.g. those in the NHS, emergency services, education, logistics, essential retail amongst others). If your child falls into any of these categories, and you would be happier to send them into school, please just send them as normal on Tuesday morning, and we will meet them in school and take care of them from there. To help me work out the required staffing for this it would be useful if you could send me a quick email tomorrow to confirm this ([alan.fletcher@kla.eastern-mat.co.uk](mailto:alan.fletcher@kla.eastern-mat.co.uk)). My thanks to those who have already done so over the holiday – I think I have responded to each of those messages but if you have not received a confirmation reply from me please do feel free to resend.

Pupils attending school will be expected to take part in the same lessons via Teams as those working at home – it would be really helpful if pupils brought a set of headphones with them to enable them to do this. To help us maintain our expectations of pupils in school it will be necessary for those attending KLA provision in these next two weeks to wear full school uniform as usual. The Local Authority have confirmed to me that school transport will be provided as normal for pupils.

### **Remote Learning Access**

As we will be providing remote learning via the school's existing online systems (MS Teams, Hegarty Maths, the KLA email system, Pearson Active Learn and Go4Schools amongst others), pupils will need to have their logon credentials and passwords. If your child does not have the information they need to be able to access the school's online systems please email the data team on [data@kla.eastern-mat.co.uk](mailto:data@kla.eastern-mat.co.uk) and they will try to help as quickly as they can, although please note that these colleagues are not due to return to work until Tuesday.

## **Laptops**

In my last letter I shared that we had taken delivery of some additional laptops from the Department for Education and I asked anyone whose child needed one to contact us on the [data@kla.eastern-mat.co.uk](mailto:data@kla.eastern-mat.co.uk) email address. We have had almost exactly an equal number of requests as we have devices, so we will be beginning to give these to those families from tomorrow. I honestly do expect that further disruption to schooling is looking pretty inevitable under the current circumstances, and therefore it is going to be really important that **all** pupils are able to work successfully at home on an electronic device that is suitable for high-level study. We do expect one further delivery in future, so if you still need one and haven't yet let us know, please do so and we will try to prioritise your child in that next delivery.

## **Mass Testing**

Parents will recall that the government's intention to offer lateral flow tests for coronavirus for every pupil was announced on the day we broke up for the Christmas holiday. Although more information has been made available to headteachers over the holiday, there remains a large amount for schools to do to manage this, including finding the staffing capacity. We have begun to make our plans for this work, but as a small secondary school, it is not a straightforward exercise: The expectation placed upon us is as follows:

1. In the first week of pupils' return, administer two Lateral Flow Tests (LFTs) to every student, three to five days apart (900 students)
2. Administer weekly testing to all staff (100 staff)
3. Administer close contact testing in the event of any positive results for seven consecutive days (this could result in several hundred additional tests each week)

The practicalities of running such a programme - whilst also maintaining online teaching, pastoral care, safeguarding and in person teaching for the children of critical workers, vulnerable students, EHCPs and then whole year groups as they return into school - are a major undertaking, and not one I am willing to rush. We have been instructed to be in a position to begin to deliver mass testing from next Monday, 11<sup>th</sup> January, and we will be working to meet this deadline over the coming days. Once I am confident we are in a position to move onto the next stage of this programme I will be in touch with another update including information for parents on giving consent and data protection.

## **Risk Assessments**

I am sure everyone has been watching the reporting of the huge increase in the number of covid cases across the country, and the impact of the new, more transmissible variant of the virus. We do continue to review all of our risk assessments, and we are working on a further review in the light of this information. I will publish our updated risk assessments on the KLA website before pupils are due to return on the 18<sup>th</sup> January so that any changes we make to mitigate against this increased transmissibility in school are clear.

I apologise for the continued uncertainty we are all having to work under, and for the length of this letter trying to explain how KLA will try to manage this uncertainty! I hope it provides all the information that you need; if not, please do feel free to email me at [alan.fletcher@kla.eastern-mat.co.uk](mailto:alan.fletcher@kla.eastern-mat.co.uk) and I will do my best to answer your query if I can – although please do understand that this is going to be an incredibly busy and pressured week for all school staff, so it may take me a little longer to respond than I usually aim for.

As always, thank you for your support during these days.

Alan