

31st December 2020

Re: Arrangements for the beginning of the spring term 2021

Dear Parent/Carer,

I hope you have had an enjoyable Christmas, despite the restrictions in place. I would not normally write to you at this time of year, but following the announcement yesterday afternoon by the Secretary of State for Education, I thought it would be useful to give you an update on the timeline for students returning to school for the spring term. I would also like to take the opportunity to provide more detailed guidance on how your child will access the remote learning that will be put in place during the first couple of weeks. In summary, the key information is as follows:

- The staggered start for the return of students has been pushed back by one week. This is to give schools more time to roll out mass testing to help find asymptomatic cases.
- In the week beginning **Tuesday 5th January** all students in all year groups will have remote learning with online lessons on Microsoft Teams following the pattern of their normal timetable. We will be providing places in school for identified vulnerable students and the children of critical workers where requested (see below).
- In the week beginning **Monday 11th January**, we aim to start the programme of testing, with Year 11 and 13 students returning as testing is rolled out. Remote learning will continue for Years 9, 10 and 12. Vulnerable students and the children of critical workers will continue to attend school.
- All students should be returning for face-to-face education by **Monday 18th January**.
- Vocational exams scheduled for the first two weeks of January will go ahead as planned.

Remote learning

Until our students return to school to resume normal lessons, they will be expected to engage with remote learning. This will involve a *blended approach* consisting of directed tasks, set by their usual class teachers through **Satchel**, and live learning where their class teachers will deliver content using **Microsoft Teams**. Most of our students, with the exception of Year 9, are now familiar with accessing lessons remotely but the information at the end of this letter should be helpful to parents, carers and students.

Children of critical workers

If you are a critical worker ([definition](#)) and home arrangements mean that childcare is a concern, then please complete the form accessible via the following link:

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=vw06oUdmdUi2c97IS27kAQdTbfdR9MBMhAhJBy7fSaxUM0hGRkJZWVY2ODE0QjFRSIZEWks2WU1LNi4u>

Once you have completed this form, please accept this as confirmation that your child will be attending school on the dates that you have specified.

COVID-19 testing

On 17th December, the Department of Education announced it would be making COVID-19 tests available in schools to test students before they return. Yesterday we received further guidance and some training webinars are being made available on Monday 4th January. We are awaiting receipt of the lateral flow testing devices which are expected to arrive on Monday along with PPE and other materials.

At this stage, I cannot be more definitive about any arrangements for testing and I will write to you about our plans in more detail next week. Participating in the testing is optional for students and consent will need to be given by a parent/carer for students under the age of 16. The Department for Education has provided answers to some of the key questions you might have and these are available via the following link:

<https://dfemedia.blog.gov.uk/2020/12/15/mass-testing-in-schools-your-questions-answered/>

As always, thank you for your continued support and I will take this opportunity to wish you a 'Happy New Year'.

Best wishes and take care,



Chris Smith
Headteacher

Accessing Remote Learning

In order to access our provision, students will require an appropriate device such as a laptop, PC or Chromebook. Tablets and mobile phones do work with both Satchel and MS Teams but these may only be short-term solutions as they are not necessarily suitable for students to complete and submit work. If you have any issues with accessing remote learning provision, please advise Mr Siddle by sending an e-mail to learning@southbromsgrove.worcs.sch.uk If students are experiencing difficulty logging in or require passwords to access the network, Satchel or any websites please use this e-mail to let Mr Siddle know.

The Format

Students will follow their usual timetable whilst learning at home. They will receive tasks and activities from the teachers via Satchel, either at the start of the school day or at the start of the lesson itself. Teachers will also send out a link to a Microsoft Teams session to all students before the lesson. We envisage a typical 60 minute lesson will follow this format:

0 to 10 minutes	Teachers send any resources to students in their class, including worksheets, PowerPoints and web links via Satchel. Teachers send students a link to the MS Teams session.
10 to 40 minutes	Live lesson will involve approximately 30 minutes content / teacher delivery.
40 to 50 minutes	Q & A with students and set any homework / further study.
50 minutes to 1 hour	Send any additional resources if required via Satchel. Teachers and students have time to prepare for the next lesson.

PSD

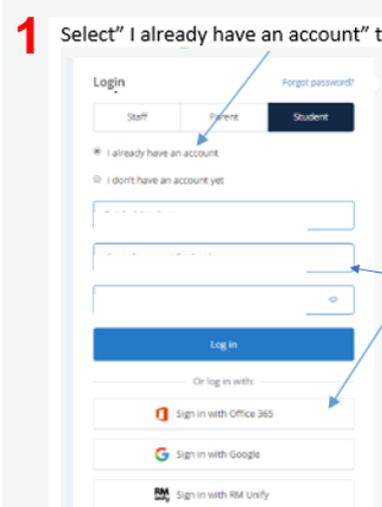
We do expect students to join a Microsoft Teams session with their tutor every day at the usual time. Tutors will send out a link in advance of PSD

Satchel

We intend to set tasks and activities and share resources with students via Satchel. Our students are familiar with using this platform as all homework is set using Satchel. Here is a reminder:

Go to: <https://www.satchelone.com/login>

1 Select "I already have an account" then select "Office 365" then use your existing computer login and password



2 Please leave these fields blank!
You will be asked for your login details on the next page.
Username: your school e-mail address
Password: Your password to access your school e-mail

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Parents and carers are able to see the work set for their child on Satchel. You were sent a PIN at the start of the academic year. If you require this to be resent in order to give you access to your child's remote learning tasks, please e-mail Mr Siddle using learning@southbromsgrove.worcs.sch.uk

Microsoft Teams

For each lesson, students will receive a link, from their class teachers, inviting them to join an MS Teams session. It is a safe platform and is quite easy to use. There is no expectation for students to appear on camera and we understand that some people will not want to appear on screen. Students may just use the chat functionality and/or use the microphone. Other students may utilise all the functionality of Microsoft Teams. If your child is experiencing difficulty using MS Teams, please contact Mr Siddle using learning@southbromsgrove.worcs.sch.uk

Remote Learning Agreement and Further Information

More information about remote learning is available on our website. It is also important that all students adhere to the guidelines in our Remote Learning Agreement. This is on the Remote Learning Advice page of our website in the related documents section at the bottom. I would appreciate it if you would take a few moments to read this document with your child:

<https://www.southbromsgrove.worcs.sch.uk/page/?title=Students+and+Parent+Advice+for+Remote+Learning&pid=265>