



Atlantic Academy Portland

an Aspirations Academy

Miss Heppell - Principal of Primary
Mrs Bishop - Principal of Secondary

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Dear Parent/Carer,

You may already be aware that yesterday afternoon brought some news that has significant implications for the first week of term in January 2021. The government has decided that **secondary schools** will have a staggered start to the new term. I am writing now to give you the earliest possible notification about this. In summary:

- Students in exam year groups (Year 11) will attend school as usual from the start of term on Tuesday 5 January 2021.
- Vocational exams scheduled for the week of 4 January will go ahead as planned.
- Students in all other year groups- Years 7, 8, 9, and 10- will start the term on Tuesday 5 January with **online learning at home**. The government's current position is that all students will be fully back in school receiving face-to-face education by **no later than 11 January**. Work will be set via GoogleClassroom. Please refer to our website if your children have still not logged into your classroom: [codes here](#).
- Vulnerable students and the children of critical workers will also be able to come to school for face to face learning. This will take place in year group bubbles. To enable us to plan for this, I would ask that the following google form be completed. [Staggered Start of Term Google Form](#)
- **Primary students** are not affected by this staggered start and are expected **in school on Tuesday 5 January 2021**.

We understand that the staggered start is to allow schools to set up testing systems for all students and staff on their return to face to face education. We are still awaiting details of exactly how these testing systems will operate. The aim is to minimise disruption during the spring term by helping identify positive cases when pupils return to face-to-face education following the Christmas break. We currently believe that those students attending face-to-face education in the first week of term will be offered the first testing dates. Testing will be **optional, but strongly encouraged**. Consent will be required from the student or parent as appropriate. We will provide full details as soon as possible after we receive more clarification from the government.

Blended Learning

We very much hope that when all children return on Monday 11th January that it will be the end of any significant disruption. However, the Trust has this week agreed to a new 'Blended Learning Policy' which now permits 'virtual' teaching to take place in both a recorded video format and, in some circumstances (where it is appropriate and feasible), by live stream. The majority of learning tasks in the first week for Years 7, 8, 9 and 10 will be in the same format as during the lockdown between March and July 2020. However, there may be some classes who receive a link to join a live or recorded lesson. Where this is the case, strict ground rules will be in place to help keep everyone safe.



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Keeping in touch

We will use letters and texts to inform you of any other updates or changes as more information becomes available so please keep an eye on your inbox (and junk folders) in the run up to 4th January. The website will also display any important updates.

Thank you for your patience about the developing situation. Once again, I wish you and your family a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Yours sincerely

Mrs L Bishop
Principal of Secondary