



Atlantic Academy Portland

an Aspirations Academy

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

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31st December 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

Re: Secondary staggered start of term arrangements January 2021

Firstly, I hope that you and your family have been able to enjoy the Christmas holidays. I know that many plans had to be changed and I am also aware that some much anticipated trips to see family members were unable to go ahead. However, I hope this did not detract too much from the festivities.

If you have been following the news this week, you will not be surprised to be receiving a letter about a change of plan for the start of the Spring Term 2021. Yesterday the Education Secretary, Gavin Williamson, confirmed the following in a statement to the House of Commons:

- **All Primary** students in **Reception - Year 6** to return to full time education on **Tuesday 5th January**.
- **Year 11** students will not return to school until **Monday 11th January**. This is one week later than had been planned.
- **All other year groups (Years 7-10)** are expected to return in the week beginning **Monday 18th January**. This is also one week later than had been planned.
- **Vulnerable Students** and the **children of Critical Workers** are able to return from **Tuesday 5th January**. Thank you to our parents/carers who have already completed the Google Form sent at the end of last term letting us know if your child needed this supervision from Tuesday 5th January. (**Vulnerable & Key Worker student [Google Form](#)**). Please note that any students attending school are required to wear full school uniform. Please ensure they also have a sensible outdoor coat as the temperature has dropped and we will try to get outside for breaks times as much as possible.

Mass testing

The reason for this national delay in the full return to school is to enable secondary schools more time to prepare for the mass testing programme that it is hoped all students and staff will choose to participate in. The tests are expected to arrive on Monday 4th January. Training needs to take place for the staff conducting the tests and the logistics of arranging up to 800 tests (taken twice by everyone) also needs careful planning. You will receive further information about the testing process including information about the consent that is required in due course.

We are hopeful that we will be able to do both the initial test and the repeat test for Year 11 students between Monday 11th and Friday 15th January. Depending on our experience of conducting these tests, it may be that the return for Years 7, 8, 9 and 10 will need to be phased during the week beginning 18th January. I will write to you nearer the time when the logistics of this have become clearer.



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Online learning

In the meantime, the start of the term will see all the students return to 'online' learning. Those students who are vulnerable or children of key workers who are booked in to return on the 5th January will be supervised, completing the same online work as their classmates. Although the government has said that work in the first week only needs to be set for Years 11, **we have made plans to set this for all students in order to keep them learning and prepared for their face to face return.** Students will continue to follow their normal timetable online.

Year 11 chromebooks

We are aware that there will be some Year 11 students who do not have access to a device and were not issued with a chromebook on the last day of term, as we thought they would be having face to face contact. If your child is in Year 11 and in need of a chromebook, please collect one from the secondary reception on Monday 4th January between 10am and 2pm, to support their remote learning.

Year 10 and 11 Vocational Exams

The Secretary of State also indicated that the external assessments being taken by Year 10 and 11 vocational students in January will still go ahead as planned. This means that the **Travel and Tourism** students who have a drop down day on the **Thursday 7th and exam on Friday 8th January 2021**, will be expected at school for these days. We strongly encourage these students to participate in the lateral flow testing prior to face to face contact in school and will need consent which will be on a google form in a letter on Monday with further details.

The **Year 10 & 11 Hospitality** groups also have an exam on **Thursday 14th January 2021** with a drop down on **Tuesday 12th** for year 10 and **Wednesday 13th for year 11**; further details will follow with regard to the plans to support this.

Free School meals (FSM)

During the initial weeks of term, our canteen will be offering a reduced service to those students who are in school. If there are any students who are eligible for **free school meals** but are not going to be in school, there is still the opportunity to order a packed lunch at lunchtime. This would need to be collected between 11am and 1pm from the secondary reception area. To order a packed lunch, please use the following [FSM Google Form](#)

I am sorry for any inconvenience this delay to a proper return may cause you and your families. The government has said they will continue to review the situation and let us all hope that the spread of the new variant of COVID slows down in the coming weeks. The roll out of vaccinations does at least give us something to be optimistic about.

Finally, I would like to wish you all a very Happy New Year. Let us hope that 2021 brings us better news on the horizon and that in twelve months time we can look back at things to celebrate.



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Yours sincerely

Mrs L Bishop
Principal of Secondary

