



LONG CLOSE SCHOOL

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Dear Parents

You will I am sure have seen the news reports that the government has announced the introduction of mass testing for school staff and students in Years 7 and up from the start of next term. The decision to commence mass testing has been conflated with the decision to also push back the term start date for **some** students to Monday 11 January (more details below).

Whilst the concept of mass testing is to be welcomed, this news is sudden and was a surprise to us, and we are waiting to receive more detailed information from the government.

However, we want to communicate what we know today, how this may impact you and your child(ren) at the start of the new term, and to assure you we are busy planning on the back of this surprise to ensure minimal disruption to school life.

Here is the summary of what we know now about the **testing**:

- This only applies to Years 7 and up
- Testing is voluntary but encouraged. You will receive an online consent form to complete to indicate if you do, or do not, give consent for your child to be tested. We will send it as soon as the government releases the details. Please complete prior to the start of the new term – it is a 30 second task and can be done from a mobile
- The tests are lateral flow tests conducted on site: swab up the nose and in throat then applied to a pregnancy test type device. Results are available in 30 minutes
- If a positive result is returned, then a follow-up PCR test is needed. Parents will need to book this via the existing NHS route
- Close contacts of a positive case (staff and students) have the option to either isolate for 10 days (like the current regime) or have a daily test to confirm they are negative. The intention of this is to reduce the time staff and students spend isolating as a bubble
- The plan is for students and staff in secondary schools to be tested on a weekly basis
- These plans are, of course, subject to change

Here is the summary of what we know now about the **delayed return to school**:

- Students in exam year groups, such as Year 11, should all return at the normal start of term as planned on Wednesday 6 January
- Students in Years 7-10 should delay their return from Wednesday 6 January until Monday 11 January. We will provide online teaching and learning during this three-day period for these year groups
- All students in EYFS – Prep should return on Wednesday 6 January

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This means that the first two weeks of January will require that all secondary students and staff are tested at least once, possibly twice, and we are working through the logistics of how we can support this without impacting normal school operations. It clearly makes demands on our already stretched staff and our physical space, and requires careful timetabling.

We are working very closely with our colleagues at Cognita to organise the logistics, and once more we're seeing the benefits of being part of a family of schools.

We will follow up with more information when we have it, but for now I wish you a safe and relaxing Christmas break.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nijjar', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

**Miss Nijjar**  
**Headteacher**