



31<sup>st</sup> December 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

## Updated Start of Term Arrangements

Despite the move to Tier 4 at the start of the holiday period, I hope that everyone has had a restful and healthy Christmas break. For most of it, we have been waiting for clarification from the government about whether or not secondary schools would be able to begin the new term in the way in which was outlined at the end of last term (described in my letter of 18<sup>th</sup> December 2020). Yesterday, the Secretary of State made an announcement about a further delay and, consequently, I have outlined below our updated start of term arrangements.

**Monday 4<sup>th</sup> January 2021 will now be an INSET day and all students should remain at home** (including children of key workers and vulnerable students previously expecting to be in school from this day). There will be no Remote Learning or additional work set for students on this day. Staff will attend work, as usual, and will spend time collaborating, planning remote learning and preparing for mass testing, which we expect to begin during w/c 11<sup>th</sup> January 2021 (details will follow early next week).

Then, from Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> January 2021:

- **Years 7, 8, 9, 10 & 12** – students will stay at home and engage in Remote Learning from 5<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> January 2021 (Week B, then Week A), returning to school on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2021 (Week B). The exception to this will be Year 10 students taking the CAMNAT i-Media public exam on 11<sup>th</sup> January 2021 – we shall write to Year 10 students and parents separately next week to confirm the arrangements for this exam. The RE Mock Exam, originally scheduled on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2021, will now be postponed to 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2021.
- **Year 11** – students will stay at home and engage in Remote Learning from 5<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> January 2021 (Week B), returning to school on 11<sup>th</sup> January 2021 for their Mock Exams. The exams will now end on 21<sup>st</sup> January 2021 and a [revised exam timetable is linked here](#). Whilst we had already made provision to ensure that the logistical arrangements for Mock Exams supported our system of controls, we are planning additional mitigation in order to give clear reassurance to students, parents and staff.
- **Year 13** – students will stay at home and engage in Remote Learning from 5<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> January 2021 (Week B), returning to regular lessons at school on 11<sup>th</sup> January 2021 (Week A).

During Remote Learning, teachers will deliver live lessons via Google Meet, following the regular timetable, including Tutor Period at the start or end of the day. If for some reason a live lesson is not possible (e.g. a technical difficulty or a teacher who is unwell), teachers will upload work to Google Classroom instead. Students should log in at the start of their usual lesson and be patient as it may take the teacher 5-10 minutes to arrive at the correct classroom and set up. Live lessons will be 30-40 minutes in duration and students may be set additional independent work. A reminder about [Safeguarding](#) and some advice on [Remote Learning](#) are linked here.

Before the break, parents of students in Years 7-10 or Year 12 were invited to request to borrow a laptop if their child has no access to a suitable device at home. Parents of students in Year 11 and Year 13 are also now invited to make a request, if needed. Depending on demand, it may be possible to borrow one temporarily. Please email [lee.harkness@riddlesdown.org](mailto:lee.harkness@riddlesdown.org) by 9.00am on 4<sup>th</sup> January 2021.

As before, we shall make on-site provision available for vulnerable students and children of critical workers. If your child in Years 7-10 is vulnerable, we have already contacted you separately to check that your child will attend school in person from the start of term. If your child in Year 11 is vulnerable, we shall contact you on 4<sup>th</sup> January 2021 to confirm arrangements for the next day. If you are a critical worker and require on-site provision for your child in Years 7-10, you have already been invited to let us know. If there are any Year 11 students who require this provision from 5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> January 2021, please complete the details on this [form](#) by 9.00am on 4<sup>th</sup> January 2021 so that we can plan accordingly.

I am sorry for the late notice of these changes to our start of term arrangements. Contrary to common belief, schools are not given advance notice of these government announcements – I heard confirmation of these changes by watching the television yesterday, the same as everyone else! There may be some further changes to dates of events later in the term as a consequence of the delayed start – we shall advise accordingly in time.

We shall write to you again next week with details of mass testing, which we expect to begin on site during w/c 11<sup>th</sup> January 2021. In the meantime, enjoy quiet celebrations this evening and my very best wishes for a very Happy New Year.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sounick Dey', written in a cursive style.

Mr S Dey  
Principal