

Weekly Bulletin 4 Dec. 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

As we move towards the end of term, staff have been busy marking exams for Years 7-10 and 12 and planning for Year 11 interventions which will begin next week and last until May. The government have published further guidance outlining proposed adaptations to examinations in 2021 this week. Further detail about these adaptations can be found in this bulletin.

Our annual fundraising during the season of Advent has begun and we are asking pupils to find kind and creative ways of raising what funds they can to donate to CAFOD. Each individual act of kindness, selflessness and thoughtfulness, however small, builds us as a Christ centred community.

We are also making a special appeal this year for parents/carers who are able to donate a supermarket or retail shop gift card to support members of our own school community over the Christmas period. Again, further details about this are included in this bulletin.

As always we would like to extend our thanks to you, our parents/carers for your continued support.

With best wishes and prayers

Mrs M Doyle & Mrs S O'Donovan
Headteacher Associate Headteacher



Spreading some Christmas Cheer We need your help!

Every year the school community comes together to provide Christmas hampers for some of our families in greatest need of Christmas cheer. This year some parents have already contacted us asking for ways that they could support other members of the school community. It is impractical to provide hampers this year as we would normally do, but in its place we are hoping to distribute gift cards for supermarkets such as Tesco, Sainsbury's, etc.

Remember that these are for families with children and vouchers for other high street shops would also be welcome, for example Boots, WH Smith, etc.

If you feel in a position to help support us with this, we would be very grateful if you could please purchase a suitable gift card and place this in an envelop, clarifying the amount and including any till receipt needed to validate the voucher. Please mark the envelope School Hamper Voucher and ask your daughter to deliver it to the school office as soon as possible and by Monday 14 December at the latest.

In the spirit of the season of Advent, and acknowledging the extraordinary circumstances faced by our families this year, we know that this Christmas will be hard for many people.

We hope in some small way that this initiative will provide a little comfort to some members of our school community.

Thank you.



Advent

Cafod Fundraising

Our Adventure into Advent has begun!



As we enter the second week of Advent this coming weekend, we focus on the theme of PEACE. In these last weeks of preparation for Christmas, this couldn't be more relevant!

We ask for hearts that are ready to embrace the true meaning of this season:

A small green wreath of hope,
four candles symbolising the weeks of willingness to remain a bit longer in the darkness,
before we awaken and walk in the light of Christ.
In this time, we prepare to make way through the clutter to our own 'Bethlehem',
holding space in the circle to believe that something new is possible ...

Prepare me, Advent.

Prepare me
to be transformed,
to transform,
to courageously listen and speak.

Prepare me
to cover the wreath with greens of renewal,
to light one more candle in prayer each week,
to linger in suspense and anticipation.

Prepare me
to stay awake and aware,
to seek Christ in all life,
to be the manger.

We are at the half way mark in our Advent Fundraising drive for CAFOD World Gifts and I'm sure this weekend there are lots of chores to be done at home – could you sponsor your daughter to help you? All cash donations need to be handed in, in a labelled envelope, by Friday 11 December.

Many thanks for any and all donations!



End of lockdown

Terminology
Risk Level Tiers &
Contingency Plans

New guidance
for schools

School
'containment tiers'
no longer apply



Following the end of national lockdown, London now operates under a system of local risk level 'tiers'.

Tier 1 - Medium Risk

Tier 2- High Risk (which includes London)

Tier 3 - Very High Risk

What does this mean for schools?

In many ways we continue as before. The only significant change during lockdown was that children who are formally classified by their GPs as extremely clinically vulnerable were required to remain at home.

These pupils should all be back in school now. Indeed extremely clinically vulnerable pupils are now **required to attend school** in all Risk Tiers 1-3 and this also applies to pupils who have a household member who is extremely clinically vulnerable.

The only exceptions to this could be one of the very small number of pupils under pediatric or other NHS care who have been advised by their GP or clinician not to attend school.

Everyone else should be in school unless they are required to self-isolate in line with public health advice because:

- they have had symptoms or a positive test result themselves
- they live with someone that has symptoms or has tested positive and are a household contact
- they are a 'close contact' of someone who has coronavirus

A change to Contingency Plans

In the last Weekly Bulletin we explained that the government wanted schools to make contingency plans to be able to implement even stricter controls to contain the virus, in case they instructed us to do this in special circumstances. There were several options (containment tiers) to plan for, including the use of a rota system for pupils, etc. This contingency plan was drawn up.

Since then however all these educational 'containment tiers' have been scrapped. Any additional restrictions on education would now *'only be as a last resort and may only be initiated following a ministerial decision'*. These additional restrictions would be that *'secondary schools would only allow vulnerable children, children of critical workers, pupils in Years 11 and 13 and other pupils due to take external exams this academic year, to attend. High-quality remote education would be provided for all other pupils.'*

We are fully prepared for this eventuality, but it remains very unlikely that this would be happen.

Take Care
Be Kind
Stay Safe
Keep Warm!

The 11 Covid-Safe Controls in School

Everyone will know that we have had a number of Covid positive cases in school that together contributed to the decision to close the school for a short time.

All those self-isolating from those confirmed cases, have now returned but the Covid risks remain and if nothing else, it demonstrates the importance of all those in school abiding by our Covid-Safe rules.

These are being regularly reiterated to all those onsite, including the few essential visitors that come in to school.

- 1 Stay at home if you or someone in your household has Covid symptoms. Those with symptoms should [book a test](#).
- 2 Wear **face coverings** in all common areas.
- 3 **Clean hands** thoroughly more often than usual.
- 4 **Catch your coughs and sneezes** using 'Catch it, Bin it, Kill it' approach.
- 5 We have enhanced cleaning regimes.
- 6 Minimise contacts and **maintain social distancing** wherever possible.
- 7 For staff in particular situations, they will wear PPE.
- 8 We are keeping the school **well ventilated**.
- 9 Everyone should engage with the NHS Test and Trace process.
- 10 We have systems in place to manage any confirmed cases within the school community.
- 11 With any outbreak, we follow advice from the local health protection team.



The news about approval and roll out of the vaccine, starting before Christmas can give many of us some sense of hope that the end is in sight - but it is likely that these controls will remain imperative in schools for many months still.

It is vital that we do not let down our guard and as a community, we all look out for each other by playing our own part, in adhering to the recommended controls.

For the safety of others as well as for ourselves.

Travelling at Christmas? Keep Safe.

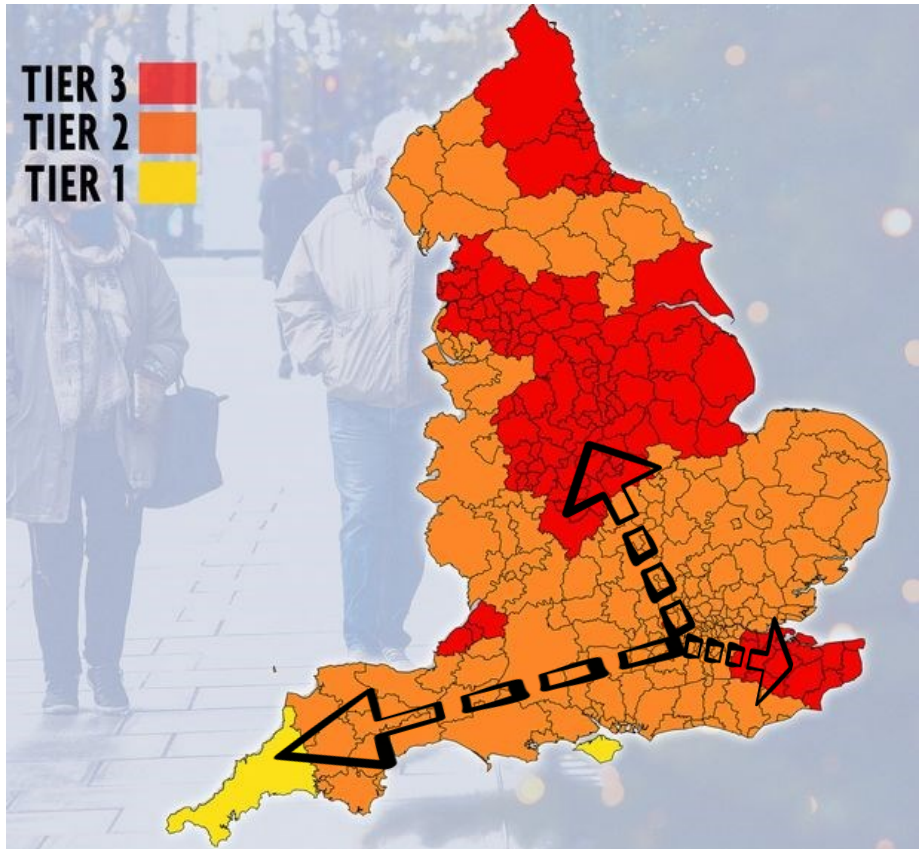
Please note the latest government advice:

Domestic Travel

'If you live in a Tier 2 [High Risk] area [such as London] you must continue to follow Tier 2 rules when you travel to a Tier 1 [Medium Risk] area.'

'Avoid travel to, or overnight stays in, Tier 3 [Very High Risk] areas other than where necessary, such as for work, education, youth services, to receive medical treatment, or because of caring responsibilities.'

You can travel through a Tier 3 area as a part of a longer journey'



International Travel

For international travel, see the [Foreign travel advice - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice) for your destination and the [travel corridors list](#) which explains the rules about self isolation when you return which depend on which countries you visited.

The [Test to Release for International Travel scheme](#) starts on 15 December. Under the scheme people returning to England who need to self-isolate will be able to take a COVID test with a private test provider to see if they can end their self-isolation early.

It is imperative that you ensure that your travel plans and the self isolation requirements on your return do not interrupt your daughter's ability to attend school.

Absences that relate to self isolation requirements that could have been predicted, must be treated as unauthorised.

New DfE Guidance on Summer 2021 Exams



Most public exams have been moved back 3 weeks, with the main exam series taking place from 7 June to 2 July 2021 to create more teaching time. See the [GCSE, GCE AS and A level timetable](#) for more information.

See below a link to the full guidance dated 3 December 2020,
[Guidance to support the summer 2021 exams - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/guidance-to-support-the-summer-2021-exams)

In ‘*recognition of the challenges faced by students this year*’, and on top of the three-week delay in exams, the government has announced that it will:

1. Allow more generous grading – which will be ‘*in line with national outcomes from 2020, so students this year are not disadvantaged*’
2. Under this system, every subject will ‘*receive the same level of generosity so that the approach doesn’t advantage some students over others depending on their subject choice*’.
3. Give students advance notice of some topics covered in in GCSE, AS and A-levels to focus revision (no further details of which topics, or in which exams).
4. Allow exam aids, such as formula sheets, in ‘*some exams*’ to give students ‘*more confidence and reducing the amount of information they need to memorise*’.
5. Additional exams as a second chance for students to sit a paper if they miss the main exam because of illness or self-isolation.
6. In ‘*extreme cases*’ where a student has a ‘*legitimate reason to miss all their papers*’, then a ‘*validated teacher informed assessment*’ can be used (but only ‘*once all chances to sit an exam have passed*’).
7. A new expert group to look at ‘*differential learning and monitor the variation in the impact of the pandemic on students across the country*’ (but regional grading has been ruled out as being unfair).
8. Students taking vocational and technical qualifications will see ‘*some adaptations to ensure parity*’.

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