



BYRCHALL HIGH SCHOOL

LIVE TO LEARN LEARN TO LIVE

Start of Term Arrangements, January 2021

1st January 2021

Dear Parent/Carer,

Can I start by wishing you all a Happy New Year! I am sure it will be a year when eventually the world overcomes the impact of the coronavirus pandemic and we can all return to normality. That will not be for some time yet, however, and I am sure you will have an awareness of governmental announcements in the last few days and be wondering what the implications are for you, your child and school arrangements in the immediate future.

I rushed out a letter on the last day of term following announcements the previous evening and directions received. Those have changed this week and we have also received greater detail. They may change again nationally but, for now, our plans at Byrchall are as outlined below:

- Those preparing for externally set examinations to be sat in week commencing 11th January 2021 will be invited to school in for some face-to-face sessions to prepare them. This applies to some year 10/11 students who study PE, Further Maths, iMedia and Child Development. PE students should already have received details of their session on Thursday 7th January and the other student groups will be contacted once arrangements have been finalised
- Year 10 mock internal examinations will be put back until week commencing 25th January
- Lessons will be provided remotely for all students from Wednesday 6th January following their normal timetables.

Mr A. R. Birchall Headteacher

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- Vulnerable Children and the children of Critical Workers will be entitled to attend the school site from 6th January, providing they meet the qualification criteria. For planning purposes, we need to know who is likely to attend so please follow the link below to the online form if you are intending for your child to return on Wednesday 6th January. Please do this as soon as possible, but at the latest by Monday 4th January 1pm. Children who attend will follow the same remote lessons to the same normal timetable as those working at home.

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=BQbkJW5GG0-4h-NajMzYEL-CkjrEGWBBoWyBFdn7cBNUME1USDRFTVg0OUdGRVBUMUpJTzU2RUE0S54u>

- During week commencing 4th January we will set up our testing facilities on the school site
- It is our current intention to test staff and year 11 pupils during that week so that they can attend school the following week. We will contact you next week with further details.
- We plan to start testing years 7 to 10 during week commencing 11th January to enable them to return to on-site learning on **Monday 18th January**. Again we will send out further details next week .
- We require completion of the attached 'Consent Form' form for your child to be tested.
- The school 'token' bus services will not operate from 6th January to 15th January.
- Please continue to email us at covid@byrchall.wigan.sch.uk to report any current infections or isolations with regard to your children.

All arrangements are subject to change if national or local policy is formally changed.

Please see below an explanation of the COVID-19 testing procedures as they relate to schools and refer to the leaflet provided for further information.

NHS Test and Trace: COVID-19 testing for staff and pupils

We are working to keep our school as safe as possible. You may have heard that testing for those without coronavirus symptoms is beginning across the country using new, quicker COVID-19 tests known as ‘lateral flow tests’.

Along with the other protective measures we are taking, these tests will help staff and pupils to remain in school safely. Up to one third of people who have coronavirus experience no symptoms. By testing we will help to stop the virus spread and help to keep our school open as safely as possible. The test is voluntary, but I would encourage everyone to take it.

We will be testing all staff and pupils who want to participate from week commencing 4 January 2021.

I enclose an instructional leaflet with some more information.

If you are happy for your child to be tested, please fill in the form attached and the enclosed consent statement (one per pupil) and return it to the school office via email to covid@byrchall.wigan.sch.uk, post or in person.

Those taking the test will be supervised by trained staff. The ‘lateral flow’ tests are quick and easy using a swab of your nose and throat. For under 18s, staff can oversee the swab process.

Results (which take around half an hour from testing) will be shared directly with staff and pupils participating. Where participants are under 16, parents or legal guardians will also be informed.

We know these tests work - in validation studies conducted by Oxford University and Public Health England, they were shown to be as accurate in identifying a case as a PCR test (99.68% specificity). The tests have lower sensitivity but they are better at picking up cases when a person has higher viral load, hence the need to test frequently.

Testing will be offered free of charge.

What if a pupil tests positive?

Participating staff and pupils who test positive will be informed about their results individually. Where participants are under 16, parents or legal guardians will also be notified. Guidance on safe travel and additional precautions will be provided along with test results.

Pupils will need to take a further ‘PCR test’ (similar to those done in local and regional testing sites) on the same day (or as soon as possible). The school will be able to provide these PCR test kits to perform at home or you can go to www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test or call 119 to book a follow-up test. If ordering a

PCR test yourselves, you should choose to visit a drive-through test site if possible, as it is faster than requesting a home test.

During this time while they wait for the PCR result (via text / email) they will need to self-isolate.

If the PCR test returns a positive result you will have to self-isolate and follow the guidance from NHS Test and Trace.

What happens if the test is negative?

They will be able to stay in school and resume their activities as normal. A pupil will only be told if they test positive on a 'lateral flow' test, so if you do not hear you can assume it was negative. A small number of pupils may need to repeat the test if the first test was invalid or void for some reason.

What if a close contact at school/college tests positive?

A close contact of someone in school who has tested positive for COVID-19 will be able to return to school if they agree to be tested once a day for 7 days and the test is negative. If they do not want to take the test, they will need to self-isolate as per the national guidelines. This does not apply to household members or close contacts outside of school who will still need to self-isolate. Further details will be provided at the time, but if you would prefer to self-isolate instead of doing daily testing, you can.

What if my child develops symptoms?

This testing programme at school is for people with no symptoms. If your child develops symptoms at any time (such as a high temperature; a new, continuous cough; or a loss or change to their sense of smell or taste) they must immediately self-isolate, and book a test by calling 119 (England, Wales and Northern Ireland) or 0300 303 2713 (Scotland) or visiting <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>.

We will support our staff and pupils throughout, but please contact us if you need this information in any other language or format or if you have any questions. You can call the office on 01942 728221 or email covid@byrchall.wigan.sch.uk.

Yours faithfully,



Mr A R Birchall
Headteacher