

Address Gatton Park, Reigate, Surrey RH2 0TD
Headmaster Mark Dixon

Telephone 01737 649000
Fax 01737 649002
Website www.raa-school.co.uk

ROYAL ALEXANDRA & ALBERT SCHOOL



Wednesday 23rd December 2020

Dear Parent

JANUARY 2021 RETURN

Over the last few days I have been working with the Senior Leadership Team and other staff, to adjust plans for the start of next term, given the recent changes in the progress of the COVID-19 virus. As you are probably aware the Government has asked us to make a number of changes to help keep pupils in school during the current phase of the pandemic.

I am writing to let you know current plans from the week commencing Monday 4th January 2021.

- Monday 4th January will be an INSET day – school closed to all pupils
- Junior School pupils should attend on-site provision as usual from Tuesday 5th January
- Year 11 and Year 13 pupils should attend on-site provision as usual from Tuesday 5th January (note that Year 11 mocks will be happening as planned but with the programme pushed back one day, to run from Tuesday 5th January. More information will be sent to pupils and parents on this)
- Vulnerable pupils notified by the School should attend on-site provision as usual from Tuesday 5th January
- Boarders in the above groups to return to boarding from Monday 4th January at 4:00pm
- Pupils not in the groups above should return to School from Monday 11th January, with boarders not in the groups above returning to houses from Sunday 10th January

If you have children in other year groups and you believe you are classed as a [critical \(key\) worker](#) in line with government guidelines, please complete the form [HERE](#) and we will confirm if we are able to offer your child a place from 5th January. If they are boarders and able to attend as critical worker children then they may return to boarding from Monday 4th January, as above.

All pupils not attending school on-site will be undertaking remote learning and should access the work as per their usual timetables via Microsoft Teams. This will start from Tuesday 5th January and more information will be sent to pupils and parents on how this can be accessed. Pupils who have public exams in January will be contacted directly regarding arrangements for these.

If your child is in one of the eligible year groups or have been notified that they should attend on-site provision, your child should attend from Tuesday 5th January as long as they are well and no-one within the household has tested positive for, or is displaying symptoms of COVID-19. Please notify the attendance officer at attendanceofficer@gatton-park.org.uk if your child is unable to attend.

All pupils should attend on-site from Monday 11th January unless they or someone within the household has tested positive for or had symptoms of COVID-19 within the previous 10 days.

Boarders in all other year groups are to return from 4:00pm on Sunday 10th January. We understand that the changes made to the start of term for our boarders may provide challenges for some families. We will work with families to provide support where exceptional circumstances exist and thank our community for understanding that these steps are a required safety measure.

We also understand that currently travel plans are problematic for some overseas boarders, and that this combined with necessary quarantine will mean that some boarders arrive back to school later than desired in January. I will be writing to all boarders later in December with more information on return to boarding, and in that correspondence there will be the opportunity for parents to communicate to us if they need an earlier return to boarding than set out above, or to inform us of later arrivals due to delayed travel / quarantine. Please be assured that remote learning will be available for all boarders on Teams from Tuesday 5th January onwards.

In the first week back, we will not be running clubs and activities after school, as per the Government guidelines. We hope that we can run these from Monday 11th January onwards, when the whole school is in attendance. We will however be running the extended day programme, for pupils eligible to attend, before school for flexi-boarders and non-boarding sixth form, as we did before, to start from Tuesday 5th January (from 07:30 – 08:30 including breakfast, if wanted, and from 16:00 – 19:00 including dinner, if wanted)

TESTING

We are planning to engage with the Government's COVID-19 testing in schools' programme. The new rapid testing, called the Lateral Flow Test, is designed to diagnose if someone may have COVID-19 despite not showing symptoms. If this test indicates a positive result then it shows that there is the possibility of COVID-19 being present, rather like a symptom would. In this case, they will then need to isolate and have a standard PCR test to see whether they do have COVID-19 or not.

Our current plan is to use the rapid testing from the start of term for Close Contact Testing. This is where pupils and staff who are isolating due to being close contacts can be tested each morning for seven school days. If the rapid test is negative then they may attend school and do not need to isolate for that day. We feel this will support greater attendance and without unnecessary risk.

We do plan to undertake routine testing of pupils and staff using the rapid testing, but will wait until we are sure that we have a sufficient supply of tests and a testing infrastructure that works effectively before we start to test year-group or boarding house bubbles of pupils. What we are planning to do, however, is to test all the pupils within a boarding house, using this rapid test, if a boarder within that house is confirmed as positive for having COVID-19. This will give us a useful indication of who else might have COVID-19, and assist us to isolate more effectively within the house.

All parents will get more information from me later in December, more targeted to their situation of whether they are a boarder or flexi-boarder. In this second letter there will be more details about our planned use of rapid testing and a consent form for you to complete for it.

As you may imagine much might change over the next few weeks but please rest assured that we are monitoring the situation very carefully and liaising with the Department for Education, Public Health England, Surrey County Council, and the Boarding School Association to consider what we are doing. We will inform you if changes need to occur.

I would like to thank you, once again, for bearing with us as we navigate a path through these uncertain times.

Yours sincerely



Mark Dixon
Headmaster

What to do if your child develops symptoms of COVID 19

If your child develops symptoms of COVID-19, they must not come to school and should remain at home for at least **10 days** from the date when their symptoms appeared. Anyone with symptoms will be eligible for testing and this can be arranged via <https://www.nhs.uk/ask-for-a-coronavirus-test> or by calling 119.

All other household members who remain well, must stay at home and not leave the house for 10 days. This includes anyone in your 'Support Bubble'.

Further information is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>

The 10-day period starts from the day when the first person in the house became ill.

Household members should not go to work, school or public areas and exercise should be taken within the home.

If you require help with buying groceries, other shopping or picking up medication, or walking a dog, you should ask friends or family. Alternatively, you can order your shopping online and medication by phone or online.

Household members staying at home for 10 days will greatly reduce the overall amount of infection the household could pass on to others in the community

If you are able, move any vulnerable individuals (such as the elderly and those with underlying health conditions) out of your home, to stay with friends or family for the duration of the home isolation period.

Symptoms

The most common symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) are recent onset of:

- a new continuous cough
- a high temperature
- a loss of, or change in, your normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia)

For most people, coronavirus (COVID-19) will be a mild illness.

If your child or anyone in the household does develop symptoms, you can seek advice from NHS 111 at <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/check-if-you-have-coronavirus-symptoms/> or by phoning 111.

How to stop COVID-19 spreading

There are things you can do to help reduce the risk of you and anyone you live with getting ill with COVID-19

Do

- wash your hands with soap and water often – do this for at least 20 seconds
- use hand sanitiser gel if soap and water are not available
- wash your hands as soon as you get home
- cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze
- put used tissues in the bin immediately and wash your hands afterwards

Further Information

Further information is available at <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>