

31 December 2020

Start of Term arrangements (update)

Dear Parents & Carers,

You may have seen the government announcement yesterday about further delaying the start of next term. What will now happen is:

- **Mon 4th Jan:** Staff training day (school closed to students as previously advertised)
- **Tues 5th – Fri 8th Jan:** Remote learning for all students. Students from Y7 to Y13 will be **provided with a full programme of online lessons each day**. For GCSE and A Level students, this will be mainly live lessons based on their normal school timetable.
- **Mon 11th – Fri 15th Jan:** All Y11 and Y13 must be in school. Other year groups continue with remote learning as above.
- **Mon 18th Jan onwards:** All students return to school, unless we are designated as a “contingency” area for secondary schools. We will find this out nearer the time. If we are, it will be a repeat of the previous week – Y11 and 13 in school, other years remote learning.

I am aware this decision will cause some frustration and disappointment. I want to reassure you that KAA is here for students and families, and will provide a good quality of education and support in January, even under these new arrangements.

Some points to note:

Sixth Form Assessments

Some internal exams students in Y12 and Y13 were due to sit in January will have to be slightly delayed. They will still go ahead, and students should continue to revise on that basis, making use of the extra time they have. Mr Whitlock will email students directly with further details shortly.

Laptops & WiFi

Students cannot complete remote learning without a dedicated computer and reliable internet connection. A shared device, a tablet, or a phone is not sufficient. They need their own computer with keyboard. Ideally parents can provide students with this themselves, as well as a quiet space in the house for your child to work during the school day. However, if you need to borrow a laptop or get help with your internet connection please don't hesitate to ask. We have already loaned a large number of laptops to students and provided many families with internet support, and will continue to do so. If you borrowed a laptop previously but returned it last term, and now need it back, that is also fine. We just ask that parents reserve these requests for where they are strictly necessary.

If you want to borrow a laptop or receive help with your internet please email info@kaa.org.uk ASAP and we will do our best to get in touch next week to discuss how we can help with this.

“KAA @ Home” and “Google Classroom”

These are the online platforms we use to support remote learning. With the possible exception of the new Y7 cohort, students should already understand how they work, and Y7 will get the hang of it quickly. In the next few days we will produce a simple FAQ document for parents about remote learning and share this so you can help them stay on track. The key messages are;

- Students need to be up on time and logged on for their first lesson each morning.
- Parental supervision is important. You don't have to do the work with them, but please can you – as far as possible – keep an eye on what they are doing and challenge them if they don't complete every lesson.
- Non-completion of work or failure to attend live lessons without good reason will be followed up by staff – students have one chance in life at their education, and mustn't opt out just because lessons are virtual instead of in-person.

Contingency School

Remote learning isn't right for every student, and we expect a small number in each year to continue to attend KAA from Tuesday 5th Jan onwards and complete their online lessons with us as part of the “Contingency School”. Those who can be designated as “vulnerable” – perhaps because they have a special educational need or find it particularly difficult to work from home – may be able to attend, for example. If you are a “Key Worker” and need to be out of the house during the day, then ideally you would be able to make arrangements for your child to be supervised, but if essential your child can attend also.

Directors of Learning will be in touch with specific students and parents at the start of next week, and parents can themselves express an interest in their child attending Contingency School by emailing the relevant DoL below. Please note that, in general, remote learning is the expectation however.

Year	Director of Learning	Email
7	Ms M Reed	m.reed@kaa.org.uk
8	Ms I Dewes	i.dewes@kaa.org.uk
9	Ms S Armitage	s.armitage@kaa.org.uk
10	Ms K Bates	k.bates@kaa.org.uk
11	Mr H Abubaker	h.abubaker@kaa.org.uk
12	Mr A Whitlock	a.whitlock@kaa.org.uk
13	Ms O Boyle	o.boyle@kaa.org.uk

Free School Meals (FSM)

We will issue vouchers for FSM by email in the normal way next week. Please don't contact us with queries about vouchers before Wednesday 6th Jan, as it will take us some time to process this. If you have queries after that point, or if don't currently qualify for FSM but need help making sure your children have enough food, please don't hesitate to contact us at finance@kaa.org.uk and we will do our best to provide support.

Student Covid testing in school

This is an important new development which I wrote to parents about at the end of last term. Before each year group returns in January, we want as many students as possible to have come in to get tested. Next week we will write to each year group about their slot to come in. Mass community testing like this has been proven to control virus transmission in various contexts, and is something that should make KAA a safer place for students and staff. It will also prevent contacts of a positive Covid case having to isolate – instead they can just come in each day and get tested before school for the 10 day possible infection period. Please look out for our communications about this and support us in this effort – thank you.

The Directors of Learning for each year group will be emailing parents and students in their year groups at the start of next week with further information, but I thought parents would appreciate this general update now.

A final and broader point is that I know parents may be feeling nervous about January and February. The pandemic has created so much challenge for our school community, and it feels like we are now, once again, entering a difficult phase. All I can say is that **our staff are as committed as ever** to help your children get through this period – academically and in terms of their personal welfare – and our school is lucky to have the resources to protect students from the worst disruption. As long as students work hard and play their part, and parents continue to support us, I'm confident we will cope with this next, (hopefully final) set of challenges.

With best wishes,



David Benson
Principal