

Thursday 31 December 2020



Wagon Lane, Bingley, West Yorkshire BD16 1EE
Tel: 01274 771444
Email: admin@beckfoot.org
www.beckfoot.org
Report Yr 7-11 absence by text: 07624 813492
Report Yr 7-11 absence by phone: 08442 393390

Dear Parents and Carers,

Important Update: Arrangements for the Start of the new term - January 2021

I hope you have had a great Christmas holiday so far and that 2021 will be a little kinder to us all.

I am writing to confirm that yesterday the Government reviewed arrangements for the start of the new term in response to rising Covid-19 infection rates across the country. The announcement stated, *'all pupils in exam years are to return during the week beginning the 11 January 2021, with all secondary schools and college students returning full time on the 18 January 2021.'*

We are therefore changing our arrangements as follows:

- If you are a critical worker and you would like your child to attend school, they can do so from the first day of the new term on Tuesday 5 January 2021. A definition of critical workers is included at the end of this letter.
- If your child is considered under the government's definition to be vulnerable, they should come to school to learn from the first day of term on Tuesday 5 January 2021. An explanation of children the government considers to be vulnerable is included at the end of the letter.

If your child is in either of these categories and will be attending school from Tuesday 5 January 2021, please email admin@beckfoot.org. Unfortunately, we will not be able to answer any queries until Monday 4 January 2021.

For all our other students:

- Week beginning 4 January 2021; all students will remain at home and learn remotely with the exception of any students taking Btec exams that will take place as planned.
- Week beginning 11 January 2021; Year 11 and Year 13 students will return to school for lessons, all other students will learn remotely at home.
- Week beginning 18 January 2021; all students will return to school for face-to-face lessons.

Our intention, technology permitting, is to deliver 'dual streamed' lessons to all students in all year groups from Tuesday 5 January 2021. Students must be ready to learn from 8.30am each day and follow their normal timetable until 2.45pm. This is the right thing to do to support our young people and their families at this difficult time. I know that so much work went into this provision prior to Christmas and it is work that I hope will make a difference to you all.



Headteacher:
Simon Wade
Chair of Academy Trustees:
John Winkley

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The Government explained the main reason for the delayed start in secondary schools was *'because the Covid infection rate is particularly high among this age group, we are going to allow more time so that every school and college is able to fully roll out mass testing of all pupils and students.'*

The Government is publishing the full details about testing of pupils in schools today. We do know some key things though and we will explain fully as soon as we know more:

- We will be trained to set up testing arrangements for staff and students using Lateral Flow Tests that produce results in 30 minutes.
- Testing is optional and no one will be tested without proper consent; the guidance we have so far is very clear on this.
- Lateral Flow Tests are self-administered under supervision and with guidance unless a student is unable to self-administer in which case staff will help.
- The initial plan is to test all students twice between 3 and 5 days apart. This will start with those in years 11 and 13 and move through to all those who give consent.
- Staff will also be tested weekly.
- Once all our students have been tested twice, they will only be tested again if they have come into close contact with someone that has tested positive for Covid-19. If this happens, they can opt for tests as opposed to a ten-day self-isolation.

Please be assured, we will keep you fully informed of our arrangements for testing when we have the full information from the Government about the process.

In school, we will continue to work hard to keep our infection control arrangements working effectively. You can help with this too and we would be grateful if you could remember to:

- Keep the 2-metre rule if you are dropping off and collecting students.
- Wear a mask if you are able when dropping off and collecting students.
- Avoid coming into the school building even if you have a query and instead telephone with your question.
- Follow the government's Tier rules at home so that we reduce the risk of infection in school.
- Keep children at home if they (or anyone in the household) have symptoms, arranging a test, and informing school of the outcome immediately.

We remain absolutely determined to do all we can to keep children and staff safe from infection in school and are looking forward to an exciting new term and to welcoming all our students back to Beckfoot soon.

Best wishes



Simon Wade
Headteacher

Further information:

Definition of a Critical Worker

As a reminder, Critical Workers entitled to send their children to schools are defined as 'parents whose work is critical to the coronavirus (COVID-19) response include those who work in health and social care and in other key sectors'. A more detailed list can be found here [Critical workers and vulnerable children who can access schools or educational settings - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/critical-workers-and-vulnerable-children-who-can-access-schools-or-educational-settings)

Definition of a Vulnerable Child

As a reminder, vulnerable children are expected to attend school and the Government explains that this group includes those who:

- are assessed as being in need under section 17 of the Children Act 1989, including children and young people who have a child in need plan, a child protection plan or who are a looked-after child
- have an education, health and care (EHC) plan
- have been identified as otherwise vulnerable by educational providers or local authorities (including children's social care services), and who could therefore benefit from continued full-time attendance, this might include:
 - children and young people on the edge of receiving support from children's social care services
 - adopted children, those at risk of becoming NEET ('not in employment, education or training')
 - those living in temporary accommodation, those who are young carers
 - those who may have difficulty engaging with remote education at home (for example due to a lack of devices or quiet space to study)
 - others at the provider and local authority's discretion

Please see this link for clarification [Critical workers and vulnerable children who can access schools or educational settings - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/critical-workers-and-vulnerable-children-who-can-access-schools-or-educational-settings)