



ADVANTAGE
SCHOOLS

www.advantageschools.co.uk

31st December 2020

Dear Parent/ Carer,

I am once again very sorry to be writing to you at such an unusual time with this information.

I am sure that you will have seen the announcements from the Department for Education and from the Government over the reopening of schools. I wrote to you on 18th December with an outline of what that meant for your children and families. This is a fast-moving situation and we are required to respond at speed to announcements from the government, so I know you will bear with us as and when things change further.

I am now writing with an update of what we are currently planning for the return to school in January.

Return to school in January

The Government have advised us that to support testing (see below) we must begin with a staggered start to the new term. This is significantly different to the details on the 18th December, so please do take note. It is also subject to further announcements.

Arrangements at Bedford Free School

This means that arrangements will be as follows:

Date	Years 7-10	Year 11
Mon 4 th January – Tues 5 th Jan	Staff Training Days as already announced – all pupils at home	
Weds 6 th Jan – Fri 8 th Jan	Online learning – see after the end of this letter	
Mon 11 th Jan – Fri 15 th Jan	Online learning – see after the end of this letter	In school as normal
Mon 18 th Jan onwards	In school as normal.	

I am very sorry that pupils will miss face-to-face teaching. We do believe that we must play our part in halting infections and are expecting to be very busy while delivering online learning and planning for possible testing.

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ASPIRATION • RESPECT • HONESTY

We continue to have very high expectations of pupils, and expect them to log in every single day and complete the work set to the same high standards as we do when in school. Bluntly, we will expect them to **work hard and be nice!**

Children with EHCPs and children of key workers

For those pupils with an EHCP or pupils who are children of key workers, it is incumbent on the school to offer **supervision**. In this case, it will mean that pupils follow the same work as pupils working from home. There will be no additional face-to-face teaching.

To access this provision, please email keyworker@advantageschools.co.uk with your child's name, form and the reason for requesting supervision. It is not compulsory to do so.

This provision will reduce our ability to plan and deliver online teaching, so please only use it if you need to.

Free School Meals:

For those families with pupils entitled to free school meals, we now expect to provide vouchers via Hugg for the period of 6th-18th January 2021. We will administer this as soon as we are able when colleagues have returned from holiday.

Testing:

You may have seen that schools are going to offer testing of secondary-age pupils for Covid-19 on their return in January. We understand that this is so that we can help to stop the spread by identifying asymptomatic cases and ensuring that those cases isolate for the required time.

We do not know the exact plans nor the capacity for these tests at this stage, but we believe that it means that:

- if there is capacity, pupils will be tested either before their return to school or when they return
- pupils identified as close contacts will be tested daily for seven days and be able to remain in school if they test negative (avoiding the need to isolate for ten days)
- staff will be tested weekly with results available within thirty minutes

We expect to receive tests on the 4th January and if we do receive them, we expect to be spending much of the week of the 4th January working out logistics. As we have vague guidance on testing at this point we are not in a position to inform you any further.

Schools will be required to staff and administer the tests and this may require further staffing with volunteers. We will make these plans after we receive the tests.

Tests will require parental permission and as soon as we are able to carry them out, we will write to you requesting this permission.

Bedford Borough placed in tier 4

You may have seen that following a further rise in infections, Bedfordshire is to be placed in the highest tier of restrictions. I further understand that there is significant pressure on local health services.

These restrictions include that we must not leave or be outside of our homes or gardens except where we have a 'reasonable excuse'.

A 'reasonable excuse' includes:

- fulfilling legal obligations
- education and childcare
- exercise
- medical reasons
- places of worship

The full guidance is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/tier-4-stay-at-home>

I encourage all of our pupils and their families to follow the guidance so that we can drive down the infection rate.

I am very grateful for your forbearance as we work through regularly-changing guidance.

I know you will be aware that Mr Blake, his Senior Team and all the teachers and support staff at BFS are working very hard to prioritise the well-being and education of your children. In very challenging circumstances, they will continue to prioritise this.

Finally:

It is worth reminding ourselves that the most important things that we can do to fight the pandemic are the simple things:

Remember, 'Hands. Face. Space':

- *hands: wash your hands regularly and for 20 seconds*
- *face: wear a face covering in indoor settings where social distancing may be difficult, and where you will come into contact with people you do not normally meet*
- *space: stay 2 metres apart from people you do not live with where possible, or 1 metre with extra precautions in place (such as wearing face coverings)*

We are all on the same side - if you have any concerns or are unclear please contact us using info@advantageschools.co.uk – this email box will be monitored. We expect to be in touch during the week of the 4th January 2021 with more information.

In the meantime, I know that these have been incredibly trying times for everyone. Please enjoy the rest of the holidays and have a very Happy (and safe) New Year!

Best wishes,



Stuart Lock
CEO

PS: Online Learning Reminders

Between Wednesday 6th and Friday 8th all pupils in Year 11, and between Wednesday 6th and Friday 15th of January, all pupils in years 7-10 will be set work on **Google Classroom**.

Please ask your son or daughter to check their school Google login before the start of the new term.

The majority of pupils have logged into Google Classroom on several occasions during the autumn term and should know their passwords.

If they need any support with their login, please contact Mrs Logan by email **on Monday 4th or Tuesday 5th January, before the start of term:**

elogan@bedfordfreeschool.co.uk

We understand that not having access to IT equipment such as laptops can make remote learning more challenging. If you need support with this, we have a limited amount of equipment which we may be able to loan to you. Please email:

info@bedfordfreeschool.co.uk

It is important that students understand that these days are not an extension of the Christmas holiday and we thank you for your support in helping them to get into the correct routines for completing their school work at home.

What should pupils do each day?


- Wake up bright and early and follow their normal school day routine
- Go to classroom.google.com and sign in using their school-based Google account
- Take the Online Morning Register **before 9 am**
- Look at their timetable for the day and check those classrooms on Google
- Complete the work that has been set by teachers, sticking to their school timetable where they can and taking their breaks

Full written and video guidance for pupils about how to use Google Classroom can be found on the school website:

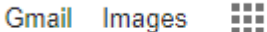

<https://www.bedfordfreeschool.co.uk/covid-19/>

How do pupils log in to Google Classroom?

To log in to google:

Gmail Images 

Sign in 

- 1) Go to classroom.google.com (or any other google website).
- 2) Click 'sign in' in the top-right corner. If you are already signed in to a Google account on that computer, click the initial instead.
- 3) If you are logging in for the first time on that device, enter your username and password. If you have logged in before,   select your **school** Google account.

Username = your school ID [number@student.bedfordfreeschool.co.uk](mailto:001234@student.bedfordfreeschool.co.uk)

e.g. 001234@student.bedfordfreeschool.co.uk

Password = the password you use to log on to school computers, or whatever you have changed it to since.

- 4) Whenever you are using Google for anything related to school, check that you are logged in to your **school** Google account.

If you are logged in to a personal Google account, you won't be able to access any school work or the register. Google has a habit of switching between accounts, so if something doesn't work check that you are logged in to the right account first!

How do pupils take the Online Morning Register?

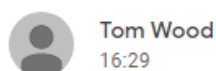
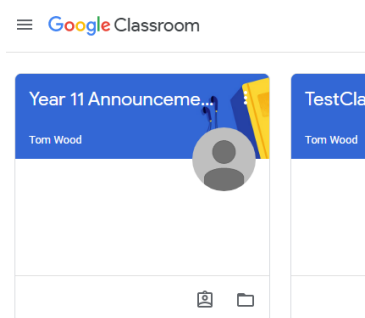
Go to your classes in Google Classroom.

Open the class 'Year 7/8/9/10 Announcements'

At the top of the Class Stream, you will see a message about the register with a Google Form attached.

Click the form to open it.

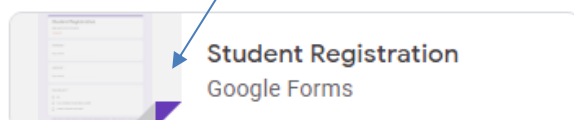
Fill in your details and submit the form when done.



Below is the Online Morning Register. Click on the form and fill it in.

You need to take OMR before 9 am on any day where you are absent for reasons related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

If you are absent for any other reason, you should not complete this register - please follow the normal absence procedure and have a parent ring the school.



Will 'live' online teaching take place?

We expect that some 'live' online teaching will be used to deliver explanations of new content. This will take place on Google Meet. Further details and guidance for pupils can be found in the Google Classroom Student Guidance booklet on the school website.

It is important that pupils follow the code of conduct for online lessons at all times:

Code of Conduct for Online Lessons

When taking part in an online lesson I agree to:

Before and after the lesson

-keep my login details and password safe and never share them with anyone else

During the lesson, at all times

-conduct myself appropriately and follow my teacher's instructions, in the same way I would in a real classroom

-be polite and show respect to my teacher and fellow students and never do, or help someone else to do, anything which could make them feel uncomfortable, threatened or unsafe, or disrupt the lesson in any way

-to the meeting being recorded, for everyone's safety

-leave my camera switched on and facing me so that my teacher can communicate with me

-mute or unmute my microphone if asked to so that I can communicate with my teacher

-never share my screen unless directed to by the teacher

-never display an inappropriate or offensive profile picture

-dress appropriately for the meeting. I won't wear pyjamas, anything revealing or anything with an offensive image or slogan

-take part in the meeting in a public part of the house. I won't take part in the meeting in my or another bedroom.

-report any inappropriate behavior I see or hear to a member of staff

-work hard and be nice

At the start of the lesson

-have my camera switched on and respond clearly to the register so my teacher knows I am in the lesson

-mute my microphone once I've responded to the register

At the end of the lesson

-leave the lesson immediately when asked to by my teacher