

18th December 2020

Dear Parents/ Carers,

I am very sorry to be writing to you on the last day of term with this information. I am sure that you will have seen the announcements from the Department for Education and from the Government over the fight against the Covid-19 pandemic. I write with an outline of what this means for your children and families.

Bedford Borough placed in tier 3 – very high alert

You may have seen that following a rise in infections, from midnight this Saturday 19th December the Borough of Bedford is to be placed in the highest tier of restrictions.

These restrictions include that we must not meet indoors with anyone that we do not live with or have a support bubble with, and outdoors, socially distanced, only with 6 people in the following locations:

- parks, beaches, countryside accessible to the public, forests
- public gardens
- allotments
- the grounds of a heritage site
- outdoor sports courts and facilities
- playgrounds.

The full guidance is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/tier-3-very-high-alert>.

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

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.

Arrangements at Bedford Free School

This means that arrangements will be as follows:

T: 01234 332277 E: info@advantageschools.co.uk Advantage Schools, 12-16 Cauldwell Street, Bedford, MK42 9AD

ASPIRATION • RESPECT • HONESTY

Date:	Years 7-10:	Year 11:
Monday 4 th January – Tuesday 5 th January	Staff Training Days as already announced – all pupils at home	
Wednesday 6 th January – Friday 8 th January	Online learning – see below	In school as normal
Monday 11 th January	In school as normal	

I am very sorry that pupils in Years 7-10 will miss face-to-face teaching. We do believe that we must play our part in halting infections.

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.

To access this provision, please email keyworker@advantageschools.co.uk with your child's name, form and the reason for requesting supervision.

Free School Meals:

We will communicate with families of those pupils entitled to free school meals on 4th January with arrangements for the 6th-8th January. This is very likely to be a food parcel available for collection from the school.

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:

- staff will be tested weekly with results available within thirty minutes
- 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).

We also believe that, as the guidance we received from the Department for Education last night says:

“Schools delivering this programme will enable as many staff and pupils as possible to get tested from the first week of term, the week commencing 4 January. This will be done with lateral flow device tests. If the pupil's first test is positive, they should immediately self-isolate and have this positive test confirmed with a standard Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) test (they take more time because they are usually processed in a laboratory). If the pupil's first test is negative, they should be tested again 3 days later. If this test is positive, they should self-isolate and confirm this with a PCR test.”

We will be taking up this offer and if we are able to, we encourage all pupils to get tested so that we can keep the community at BFS as safe as possible.

Schools will be required to staff and administer the tests and we are making plans to do so. We believe further guidance may arrive and we will be in a position to inform you on 4th January 2021.

Online Learning

Between Wednesday 6th and Friday 8th 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.

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

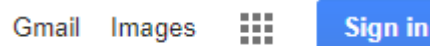
<https://www.bedfordfreeschool.co.uk/covid-19/>

What should pupils do each day?

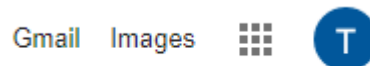
- Wake up bright and early and follow their normal school day routine
- Go to classroom.google.com and sign in using their school-based Google account
- Take the Online Morning Register **before 9 am**
- Look at their timetable for the day and check those classrooms on Google
- Complete the work that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

How do pupils log in to Google Classroom?

To log in to google:



- 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?

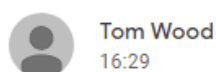
Go to your classes in Google Classroom.

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.

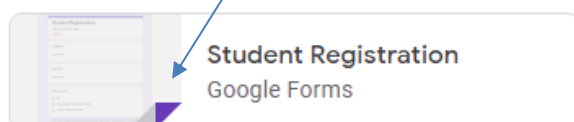
Fill in your details and submit the form when done.



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

You need to take OMR before 9am 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

-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 pajamas, 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 behaviour 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

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).*

Please continue to do all you can to support the fight against this virus. I hope you have a restful holiday, and we look forward to seeing you all in January of 2021.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stuart Lock', with a horizontal line underneath it.

Stuart Lock
CEO