



31<sup>st</sup> December 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

### **Tier 4 Restrictions & Remote Learning – Y12 Students**

Following the Prime Minister's decision to categorise London as Tier 4 and yesterday's announcement by the Secretary of State for Education that there will be a delay to students returning to school, I am writing to provide you with further details and information.

As you will appreciate, this continues to be a fast moving and fluid situation and therefore the below may be subject to change following any further last-minute announcements from the government. My team and I remain committed to ensuring all our students receive the very best possible education and exam preparation to allow them to access the next stage of their education or employment. It goes without saying that NCS teachers will continue to plan and deliver high quality lessons, and where this needs to occur remotely all students will have their teachers teaching them as normal, ensuring no loss in learning time.

### **Remote Learning – 4<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> January 2021**

In line with government requirements, all Y12 lessons from 4<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> January 2021 will take place remotely over Microsoft Teams. The 1-2-1 deployment of iPads ensures all students continue to have access to their lessons which teachers will teach. Barring any changes, we expect Y12 students to return to face to face teaching from 18<sup>th</sup> January 2021.

The school timetable for next week will be slightly altered, but will revert back to normal from 11<sup>th</sup> January 2021 when Y13s return. The school timetable for 4<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> January 2021 is as follows:

<b>Lesson Period</b>	<b>Lesson Duration</b>
Period 1	8:30am-9:30am
Period 2	9:30am-10:30am
Morning Break	10:30am-10:50am
Period 3	10:50am-11:50am
Period 4	11:50am-12:50pm
1-2-1 Sessions Only - No Form Time	12:50pm-1:10pm
Period 5	2:00pm-3:00pm

Where students do not have a quiet place to study or there is poor internet connection at home, they will be permitted to attend the NCS and use one of the designated classrooms. Students who wish to take up this offer must email me in advance and sign in and out of reception so we know who is in the building for health and safety reasons. Students must attend in full Sixth Form uniform.

### **Student Expectations/Information – Remote Learning**

- Students must attend all online lessons, if they are ill parents/carers must contact Ms Macdonald via email on [jmacdonald@ncs6.org](mailto:jmacdonald@ncs6.org) by no later than 8:00am.
- A register will be taken for all lessons and absences will be followed up by Ms Macdonald (Attendance Officer). **A reminder that attendance/punctuality data is referred to in UCAS references.**
- Students are not expected to wear school uniform but must be dressed appropriately (smart/casual) as they will be seen by the teacher and other students.



- Students need to have their lesson in a quiet place, no sibling/s should be in the room.
- Students should not record any of their lessons.
- Cameras on iPads must be switched on so teachers know who is present (unless the teacher gives students permission to turn the camera off).
- The microphone should be on mute to prevent group discussions and/or any background noise.
- If a teacher asks a question, they will ask the student who they want to answer to unmute.
- Students can ask questions in the 'chat' forum which everyone in their class will see.
- Students can submit work for marking/review in the 'Private Chat' forum.

### **Clinically extremely vulnerable students (CEV)**

Students who were originally identified as CEV should speak to their GP or specialist clinician if they have not already done so, to understand whether they should still be classed as CEV. Those young people whose doctors have confirmed are still CEV are advised not to attend education whilst Tier 4 restrictions are in place. Students who fall into this category must email me and provide evidence from a clinician upon which they will be able to access their lessons remotely from 18<sup>th</sup> January 2021.

Young people who live with someone who is CEV, but who are not CEV themselves, should still attend education from 18<sup>th</sup> January 2021.

### **Clinically vulnerable people**

Students who are clinically vulnerable or have underlying health conditions but are not CEV, may continue to attend education in line with current guidance from 18<sup>th</sup> January 2021.

### **Mass/Serial contact testing**

At this stage, I am not in a position to be able provide any further information on how this will work in practice. However, on our return we will be pouring over what guidance is available and I will write to you once more with an update.

### **Students who wish to drop a fourth A level subject**

It is my sincere professional advice that students continue with four subjects for as long as possible. There are a number of sound educational reasons for this:

- a) Studying a wide range of subjects provides students with greater knowledge and understanding.
- b) In the recent past, all students of similar ability studied 4 AS subjects as this was the norm and provided the breadth of subjects that many students from the independent sector enjoy.
- c) Once a student drops a subject they will not be able to pick it up again (there are no exceptions).
- d) As you are aware students must achieve strong grades in the End of Year 12 Summer Exams if they wish to secure A\*/A UCAS predicted grades. The number of students who start of thinking they will study a particular combination of subjects in Y13 only to change their minds once their Y12 results/UCAS predictions come out is staggering. It is better to delay the decision to drop for as long as possible until a student is 100% sure they will excel in the three subjects they wish to study.
- e) The data shows that strong performance at GCSE in the sciences and maths is no guarantee of similar performance at A level (unlike humanities where there is a strong correlation assuming students work hard). Therefore, if students drop to three sciences or two sciences and maths, but perform poorly in assessments, their UCAS predicted grade will not be strong enough to apply to the top universities.

Should parents and students still feel that it is in their best educational interest to drop a fourth A level subject then please see below the steps which must be taken.



**(i) Who cannot drop their fourth A level subject?**

Student with the following combination of subjects are not permitted to drop their fourth subject (unless there are extenuating circumstances):

- a) Any student studying Further Maths who wishes to drop a subject other than Further Maths.
- b) Students studying at least 3 sciences (unless the subject they wish to drop is a science/maths).
- c) Students studying 2 sciences and maths (unless the subject they wish to drop is a science/maths).
- d) Where poor performance in Mock Exams and in class assessments cast doubt on a student's chances of securing strong grades in the subjects they wish to continue with in Y13.

**(ii) Protocol for dropping a fourth A level subject**

- a) Student informs their teacher & Ms Lomax (Vice Principal) they wish to drop a subject (email is sufficient from 4<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> January 2021, from 18<sup>th</sup> January 2021 students must speak to their teacher and Ms Lomax in person).
- b) **Students must attend all remote lessons until they have received confirmation from Ms Lomax that they can stop attending remotely (this may not occur until 5<sup>th</sup> January 2021).**
- c) Where permission to drop a subject has been granted, the student will continue to attend the lesson (from 18<sup>th</sup> January 2021) and remain on the class register so we can ensure they are present (students who decide to drop a subject and have been given permission from Ms Lomax will not attend the remote lesson from 4<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> January 2021).
- d) When students return on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2021, students will need to use the gained time to engage in independent work.

**(iii) What if I still want to drop a fourth A level subject despite being advised by my teachers not to?**

- a) Where a student with the support of their parents/carers remains adamant they wish to drop a fourth subject, they will be permitted to do so.
- b) A letter will be sent home setting out our advice and some of the consequences (highlighted above) of not securing strong grades in the summer exams which you must read, sign and return before your child is allowed to drop a subject.
- c) Again, students must continue to attend all lessons until they receive confirmation from Ms Lomax they can stop attending a lesson.

If you have any questions or queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully

Mr. M Ismail