

NATIONAL LOCKDOWN - JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2021 FAQs FOR PARENTS/CARERS

We have put together a list of frequently asked questions to help parents and pupils through the implications of the national lockdown starting in January 2021. There is more information on our website. If you still have further questions or queries, please do not hesitate to contact us at office@theswanschool.org.uk and we will endeavour to get back to you as soon as possible.

To the best of our knowledge, this information is accurate as of 5th January 2021 but is subject to change at any time. Please continue to check our website and look out for emails from the school regularly.

School Closure

Why have schools been asked to close?

Schools have been asked to close as part of the national lockdown. Although the risk to children from COVID-19 remains low, schools are sites of increased social interaction and therefore bring an increased risk of spreading the virus within the community.

When will school reopen?

We cannot say for sure when schools will reopen. The current guidance suggests that schools may reopen after February half term but this will be under review by the government. We will keep you updated as and when we know more.

Will staff be available during this period?

Most staff will be working on-site on a rota basis to deliver online lessons and support students as part of on-site provision. Some other staff will be working from home. Please be assured that we are available to support during this difficult period so please do get in contact if there is anything you need.

Will I have any contact with the school?

Staff will be making welfare calls to all students on a fortnightly basis - tutors or co-tutors will be in contact via the parent phone number that we have on record. Some children will have more frequent contact from a member of the Pastoral, Accelerated Learning, or Senior Leadership Teams.

My child is entitled to Free School Meals (FSM). Will the school be continuing to provide them?

If your child is entitled to Free School Meals (FSM), the school will make arrangements for food vouchers to be sent to you - this is the same system that was used during the previous lockdown and during the Christmas holiday. If you believe that you may now be eligible for free school meals, please contact office@theswanschool.org.uk and we will be able to help you check and make arrangements.

What if I am concerned about a child at the school?

If you have concerns about a child at the school, you should contact us as soon as possible. We will do what we can to follow up. You can also use the 'green button' on our website to raise any concerns. If you believe a child is in immediate danger, please contact the emergency services who will assist.

On-site Provision

Who are vulnerable children?

Vulnerable children include those with a social worker or have an EHCP, but we have also chosen to target students who we know struggle to access remote teaching at home or need additional support with their learning. We have been in contact with these targeted students already; if you feel your child is in this group and you would like to request provision, please email office@theswanschool.org.uk.

Who are key workers?

Key workers are defined [here](#). Broadly speaking, they are workers who are essential in the national response to this coronavirus. (i.e. NHS staff, the Emergency Services, etc.)

Why are schools being kept open for only vulnerable pupils or for the children of key workers?

Schools are being kept open for these two groups because either:

- the Government considers it essential that the child is looked after and continues to receive support from their school during this time of closure; or
- it is essential that their parent(s) carry on going to work so that they can support the national response to COVID-19

I am a key worker. Do I have to send my child to school?

No. You should only send your child to school if there is no other appropriate care available. Key workers have already been asked to complete a form to request provision; if your circumstances have now changed please email office@theswanschool.org.uk so that we can plan for your child's attendance.

What will school be like for those children attending on-site provision?

Students in school will follow the same timetable as those learning from home but will be supported by teachers. They will also participate in PE lessons.

- The day will run from 9.15am to 3pm (no tutor time). Students are welcome on-site from 8.30am.
- Students should bring their own headphones if they have them.
- Students will need to wear their PE kit
- Students will bring their own packed lunch.

Exams

Are GCSE and A Level exams still running this summer?

No. The Government has announced that public examinations will now not take place in the summer due to the disruption to education over the last year. However, this does not affect any Swan students as they are not in examination year groups.

Will Swan students still have assessments as normal this cycle?

Children will continue to be assessed by their teachers as a regular feature of their lessons. It is vital that students submit the work as requested so that teachers are able to identify any gaps in learning and plan to address them. At the current time, we intend to carry out formal assessments in week 10 as previously planned, however this is subject to change depending on how long school closure lasts.

Lateral Flow Testing for Covid-19

What are lateral flow tests?

Lateral Flow Tests (LFTs) are a new, quicker way to test for COVID-19. From January 2021, they have been made available to schools to test staff and students on-site in order to help identify asymptomatic carriers of the virus.

How will staff be tested?

Staff will be 'routinely tested' on a weekly basis from the start of January. 'Serial testing' will also be used on staff who have come into contact with someone who has tested positive for Covid-19. In these cases, individuals will be tested before school each day - if the test returns a negative result they will be able to stay in school, minimising the need for self-isolation.

How will 'on-site' students be tested?

Students attending on-site provision will be tested at the start of January - a consent form has been sent directly to you if this applies to your child. We are currently looking into whether we can routine test all students who attend on-site provision and are awaiting a response from the Department for Education on this.

When will other students be tested?

It is currently our intention to mass-test all students before they return to school following the national lockdown. More details about this will follow once we have more clarity about when the lockdown period will end.

Do I have to consent to my child taking part?

Yes – these tests are optional but you are strongly encouraged to take part. They will help identify pupils who are asymptomatic who will then need to self-isolate. Consent forms have been sent to the parents/carers or those students attending on-site provision, forms for others will be sent to parents once we have a clearer idea of when this will take place.

What if my child doesn't want to do it?

You are strongly encouraged to discuss this with your child and take part. If you do not give consent, then your child will not be tested

Home Learning

How will my child continue to learn at home?

During this period of school closure, it is vital that they engage with their learning as best as they can. All work is provided online through Google Classroom. Students will follow a simplified timetable of five lessons per day - [Year 7](#) and [Year 8](#) - and all lessons will include a video element of teacher exposition followed by tasks that students need to complete. [You can view the guide to distance learning here.](#)

How much work should pupils do?

We would expect all children to complete about five hours of school work each day.

Where is home learning provided?

All work for pupils is provided through Google Classroom. [You can read more about how to access distance learning via Google Classroom here.](#)

Why are you not delivering 'live' lessons?

We feel that video lessons, but not live ones, are the best way for students to learn. Students will get the benefit of clear teacher explanation but will be able to work at their own pace and at a time that best suits them.

My child normally gets extra support for their learning - will this continue?

Our Accelerated Learning Champions are putting together a programme of support for students who normally benefit from interventions in school. This will include guided reading, phone calls, and Fresh Start lessons amongst other things. A member of staff will be in contact if this applies to your child.

What other work can my child do at home?

In addition to the regular work provided by teachers, we also expect students to read for pleasure for 30 minutes per day and take part in physical exercise. There are also lots of online platforms such as BBC Bitesize and MangaHigh that students can access to support their learning.

If I don't have a computer at home, how can I help my child continue their learning?

Most students have already been loaned a school chromebook to support with home learning. Please contact office@theswanschool.org.uk if you now need to borrow a device or if you need any other IT support.