

18 December 2020



Saffron Walden County High School

Saffron Academy Trust

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To all Parents & Carers
SWCHS

Dear Parents & Carers,

We are sorry to be announcing a change to the beginning of term arrangements so very late in the year, but that is what we need to do today.

During the Global Pandemic we have made every effort as a school and Trust to be clear in our communication and to give you a good period of notice about plans, but yesterday afternoon we received a short bulletin from the Department for Education telling schools to stagger the start of the Spring term, with a full return to school being delayed until the 11th of January.

We do understand how inconvenient to you this will be. Students remaining at home are expected to continue with their normal lessons and to follow their usual timetable, but to do so remotely. We are concerned about the additional pressures this may create for families at this time, but it is clear that this is something schools are expected to put in place.

There may be some advantages to a staggered start:

- 1) It will reduce the number of students in school for those first few days of January when there might be more cases of Covid-19 linked to the holiday period and so help to reduce possible spread of the virus for the benefit of all in the weeks that follow.
- 2) It will allow us to ensure that all students are inducted back into school carefully with our expectations at this time being re-established to ensure safe operations.

As a result of this guidance, we will have the following return dates for the Spring term:

- Tuesday 5th January - Year 11 and 13 only
- Monday 11th January - Years 7, 8, 9, 10 and 12

We will be providing a full timetable of lessons on TEAMS (including some live lessons) from Tuesday 5th January for all students facing a delayed start to term.

The school will be open to the children of **CRITICAL** workers in Years 7, 8, 9, 10 & 12 from Tuesday 5th January, but we would ask parents to only use this provision if **absolutely necessary**. If your child can manage the extra days from home independently, or you have other supervision options, please could we ask you to consider these options. If you are a Critical worker and your child cannot work independently at home or have alternative supervision for these days, please complete the form below.

[Click on this link to complete the online form](#)



In addition, the school will invite some children into school who we feel might be particularly vulnerable at this time. Parents of these children will be contacted individually by the school. Additionally, we will make arrangements for Free School Meals vouchers to be available for those who qualify for them if they are not returning to school until Monday 11th January.

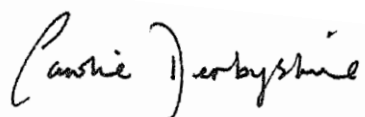
We will also separately contact those Year 12 students who are due to sit the Maths Functional Skills exam on Wednesday 6th January with details of the arrangements.

You will have read that the reason for the staggered start to term is to prepare testing centres in schools. The Essex Local Authority has advised us not to make any preparations for this until later in January when resource implications are clearer. Schools in Saffron Academy Trust will be following this advice and concentrating their efforts on teaching exam year classes in person and remotely during the first week of January.

Once again, we are sorry that we have to make this very late change to the school calendar, but we hope you understand that we have been given no choice and very little notice.

We hope you and your families have a very relaxing, enjoyable and, most importantly, safe Christmas.

Best wishes,



Caroline Derbyshire
Executive Headteacher
SWCHS

&



Polly Lankester
Headteacher
SWCHS

