

31st December 2020

Dear Parent/ Carer,

We hope you and your family are well. We are writing to you with updated information about the start of the new term in light of new guidance shared with us all yesterday by the Secretary of State for Education.

Beginning of the new term arrangements

January 4th remains an INSET day. No pupils will attend the school and teachers will use this day to plan for remote learning in the new term and for mass testing arrangements.

Our onsite provision for the children of critical workers and vulnerable children (Emergency School) will open for those pupils entitled to attend at 8.45am on Tuesday 5th January. All other pupils will start the school term learning from home using Mulberry Learn powered by Microsoft Teams (Remote Learning School).

In the week commencing 11th January we expect pupils in Years 11 and 13 - and those pupils sitting CTech exams in Year 12 - back into school for face-to-face teaching. We will write to you with more details about this next week.

We are still unclear about when we expect the whole school to be learning on site. Tower Hamlets is one of the Covid-19 contingency areas of the UK – this means that all students other than Years 11 and 13 must continue to learn at home from 11th January. The contingency areas will be reviewed on Monday 18th January and so this may change then. We will keep you fully informed whenever we have any government updates.

Remote Learning School

From Tuesday 5th January, pupils in all year groups will follow their normal school timetable and lessons will be set by teachers online. Registration will begin at 8.45am for pupils in Years 7 – 11 and lessons begin at 9.10am for pupils in the Sixth Form. It is our expectation that all pupils join their registration and lessons using Mulberry Learn, powered by Microsoft Teams.

If you have any concern about your daughter being able to join her lessons from home please contact her Head of Year.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead for the Remote Learning School is Ms Pugh
kpugh@mulberryschoolstrust.org Please contact her if you have any concerns relating to safeguarding for your daughter.

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Key Worker School

Children of key workers and vulnerable children are entitled to attend school for face-to-face lessons from Tuesday 5th January. If you would like your daughter to attend this provision, please email b.lazaro@mulberryschoolstrust.org with the name and form group of your daughter. We look forward to welcoming her back.

Children who sign up for this provision should arrive in full school uniform at 8.40am on Tuesday 5th January through the main school entrance. They will follow the same curriculum and timetable as usual, as will pupils learning from home.

Devices

We have been working hard over the last term to ensure that all children have access to a device that will allow them to engage with remote learning. We have loaned to families that need them all the portable devices that we have – (over 500 devices) – and so we think that we are in a good position now for pupils to engage fully with online learning. We hold a very up to date database of pupils' device needs.

However, if your daughter now does not have a working device, please contact her Head of Year and we will try to do what we can to help.

Free School Meals

If your daughter is learning remotely and would like a free school meal weekly lunch pack, please contact sjameson@mulberryschoolstrust.org or call the school reception. The weekly pack includes a range of items including milk, bread, canned goods, fresh fruit and/or vegetables and dried foods such as pasta or rice. They are designed to provide the equivalent of a week of school lunches for one child. If you have multiple children attending Mulberry School for Girls who are entitled to free school meals, you are entitled to multiple food packs.

In order to avoid food waste we will take requests until Tuesday 5th January at 12pm and then we will contact you about collection times for the packs. These will be distributed weekly until your daughter returns to school.

Our weekly food bank and care essentials service, that some families have been accessing, will resume shortly and we will be in touch with more details about this next week.

Mass testing of secondary school age children

We are carefully planning how we can provide mass testing at school as required by government. It is hoped that this will support the return to face-to-face teaching more quickly as it will help to keep the virus under control, making schools safer places for all. However, testing will not be compulsory and so we will contact families in due course to seek parental permission and to provide more details.

If your daughter has received a positive test result during the school holiday, we would like you to contact us on Monday 4th January to let us know. Please call 0207 790 6327 or email admin@mulberryschoolstrust.org or contact your daughter's Head of Year, as usual.

We gave out a tests to Years 11 – 13 pupils at the end of the school term. Your daughter can take this test if she would like to but it is not compulsory.

Exams

The Secretary of State for Education has been clear that exams are planned to go ahead this year as usual. Children who are preparing for public examinations and mock examinations in January should continue to do so and we will write shortly with more details about arrangements for these.

We hope you and your families have had a restful and safe holiday. Thank you for your ongoing support of the school throughout this pandemic crisis, and always. Mulberry values its pupils, their families and our local community very much. We hope the new year will bring successful defeat of the virus through vaccination and good methods of control so that we can return to uninterrupted learning on the school site soon.

In the meantime, we will continue to provide as high quality an education as possible through our remote learning school (and face to face where applicable) despite Covid-19.

As always, if you have any questions please do contact us on 0207 790 6327 or contact admin@mulberryschoolstrust.org and we will do all we can to help.

It only remains to wish you a better, happier and healthier new year for 2021. I look forward to working with you in the coming months.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'V J Ogden', written in a cursive style.

Dr V J Ogden,
Headteacher – CEO, Mulberry Schools Trust