

4th January 2022

Dear Parents/ Carers,

Firstly, I would like to wish all of you a Happy New Year, I hope that you had a pleasant holiday period.

As I am sure you are aware, COVID cases are currently extremely high across the country and this is affecting staffing levels in schools and other public services. Based on our own situation we are having to adjust the return to school for some students. There will now be a staggered return to school with **Year 9 and 10 returning on Wednesday 5th January** and **Year 11 returning on Thursday 6th January**. This decision has been taken to allow us to re-open in the safest possible way and ensure that our staffing levels are appropriate in terms of health and safety.

You may also have seen the latest news from the Department for Education, I would like to update you on the impact of this for us in school.

Lateral Flow Device Testing on return:

All students have a time allocated today (Tuesday 4th January) to attend school for an LFD test. After this LFD testing should then take place twice weekly until we are advised otherwise. LFD tests packs will be available from school and will be given out during the coming week.

Face Coverings:

With immediate effect face coverings are to be worn in classrooms by all students, unless they are medically exempt. This advice is short term only, to support pupils and teachers as they return to school this term. The advice will be in place until Wednesday 26 January, when Plan B regulations are currently scheduled to expire, at which point it will be reviewed. We would ask you to ensure your child/ children attend school with their own face covering. We do have a limited supply to distribute should any child misplace their own.

Isolation period for positive cases:

There are also changes to the 10-day period of self-isolation to reflect the changes announced nationally on 22nd December. If a student or member of staff tests positive for Covid then they may now return to school on day 8, if they have tested negative using a LFT on both day 6 and day 7, and are showing no symptoms. If for any reason they are unable to test then they should still complete the full 10 day isolation period. We would ask you to communicate clearly with our school office team to keep them informed of any Covid-related absence and subsequent return to school.

Daily testing for close contacts of COVID-19

People who are fully vaccinated, or children and young people aged between 5 and 18 years and 6 months, identified as a close contact of someone with COVID-19, should take an LFD every day for seven days and continue to attend their setting as normal, unless they have a positive test result or develop symptoms at any time. If you are not fully vaccinated and you are identified as a close contact you are required to self isolate. (You are fully vaccinated 14 days after having received 2 doses of an approved vaccine.

I hope you find this summary of the current guidance helpful and we look forward to welcoming your child back to school. If you have any questions relating to this then please get in contact with us at school.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Matthew Baldwin', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

M Baldwin
Executive Head Teacher