

4th January 2022

Dear Parent/Carer,

I hope that all of our students have had a very enjoyable and relaxing holiday. I just wanted to get in touch ahead of the start of this term tomorrow with a summary of arrangements for this week and also of the well-publicised expectations of secondary school students this month.

Arrangements for This Week

Date	Wednesday 5 th January	Thursday 6 th January	Friday 7 th January
Years 11, 12 and 13	Return to school (including on-site LFD testing)	Normal in-school timetable	Normal in-school timetable
Years 9 and 10	Remote learning at home (provided via ShowMyHomework)	Return to school (including on-site LFD testing)	Normal in-school timetable
Years 7 and 8	Remote learning at home (provided via ShowMyHomework)	Remote learning at home (delivered via Microsoft Teams)	Return to school (including on-site LFD testing)

January Examinations

The Department for Education have confirmed that the planned external examinations will go ahead over the next month or so (as will our Year 9 and 10 internal examinations). Hence students should continue to prepare for these in anticipation that this will be the case.

Lateral Flow Device (LFD) Testing

The Department for Education confirmed over the weekend that students should take the one on-site test at school this week and then continue to test twice-weekly at home. I would though encourage all students to test at home before returning to school this week, regardless of whether or not they are participating in the on-site testing, to minimise the chances of them coming into school if they have picked up the virus over the holiday.

One significant change to LFD testing expectations is that refraining from taking an LFD test for 90 days after Covid infection is no longer recommended:

"Even if someone has tested positive for COVID-19 within the last 90 days, they are strongly encouraged to take part in LFD testing on-site or at home once they have completed their isolation period for their prior infection."

Due to this development, if any parents who have contacted us over the holiday to withdraw consent for our on-site testing due to their child having Covid over the holiday would actually now like them to be tested on site then they would need to re-contact us to provide their consent.

Self-Isolation Periods for Positive Covid Cases

A reminder of the new regulations which enable students to return to school on Day 8 after infection providing they no longer have a high temperature and have recorded a negative LFD test result on days 6 and 7 of their self-isolation period.

Daily Testing of Close Contacts

A reminder that students who are close contacts of positive cases can continue to attend school but should take a daily LFD test as requested by NHS Track and Trace.

Face-Covering Wearing in Classrooms

The following is the new government guidance regarding face-covering wearing in classrooms until the promised review date of 26th January:

"From January 4th, we also recommend that in those schools where pupils in year 7 and above are educated, face coverings should be worn in classrooms. This does not apply in situations where wearing a face covering would impact on the ability to take part in exercise or strenuous activity, for example in PE lessons. This will also be a temporary measure.

Pupils in these schools must also wear a face covering when travelling on public transport and should wear it on dedicated transport to and from school.

We would not ordinarily expect teachers to wear a face covering in the classroom if they are at the front of the class, to support education delivery, although settings should be sensitive to the needs of individual teachers.

Face coverings do not need to be worn when outdoors."

In summary, students (and staff) should continue, unless exempt, to wear face-coverings in corridors and communal areas and students are now also expected to wear them in classrooms. There is one change from last Spring when face-covering wearing in lessons was last expected in that staff are not required to wear them in classrooms this time, presumably because it was felt last year that staff wearing face-coverings had too great an impact on students' ability to fully hear and understand their teachers.

I would be very surprised if the prospect of wearing face-coverings in lessons is one which students are looking forward to this term and I'm sure we all feel very sorry for them that they have to do so. Let's hope that it is only for the next 3 weeks. Thank you for supporting our students with this by letting them know about this ahead of their return to school and ensuring that they bring their own face-covering and a spare (or their exemption lanyard) to school with them. We will assume that students for whom parents have previously confirmed exemption status are those who will now be exempt from face-covering in classrooms but please do not hesitate to get in touch with us if there are any changes in this regard or if you have any further queries about any of the above.

Best wishes,

Martin Hill
Headteacher