

3 January 2022

Dear parent or carer

### **Updated Guidance from the Department of Education: Covid-19**

You will be aware through the media that the Secretary of State for Education, Nadhim Zahawi decided to re-introduce some Covid-19 restrictions into schools from Sunday 2 January 2022. This information was shared with the media before it was communicated to headteachers and as a result we need to alter our return to school this week in order to update risk assessments, adapt classrooms and communal areas and ensure you have time to prepare your child for a return to restrictions.

#### **Face coverings**

**The most notable update for children is that face coverings must now be worn in classrooms AND communal areas (corridors/dining areas) until 26 January 2022 when it will be reviewed by the DfE.** I am sure as adults we have our own opinions about children wearing masks, however it is critical that we focus on what is most important, which is your child learning in school, and so we need to support each other by not spending unnecessary time on a requirement that is currently out of our control. Please could I ask that **prior to your child's return date you ensure they have an appropriate face covering to use all day.** Whilst we have some supplies of face masks in school, we will not be able to supply a new one for every child each day. I am aware that some children are exempt from wearing face coverings and you will receive a short online form to complete so that we can issue your child with an exemption pass and avoid repeated conversations during the day. I am sure you will appreciate that with nearly 1200 children it is not possible for all members of staff to remember who is exempt. You will receive this form by the end of the school day on Tuesday 4 January and an exemption card will be given to your child when they return to school on their first day back. Any student who forgets a face covering will be issued one for the day, but I really want us to avoid spending time contacting parents and carers over things that be easily resolved before children arrive in school.

#### **Testing and UPDATED return to school**

All schools are providing on-site testing on the first week back to help reduce transmission. **Please see the change to the testing dates, times and return to school.**

	<b>UPDATED Testing date and time</b>	<b>UPDATED Return to school</b>
<b>Year 7</b>	Tuesday 4 January 2022 at 11.30am	Wednesday 5 January 2022 at 8.30am
<b>Year 8</b>	Wednesday 5 January 2022 at 8.30am	Thursday 6 January 2022 at 8.30am
<b>Year 9</b>	Wednesday 5 January 2022 at 9.45am	Thursday 6 January 2022 at 9.45am
<b>Year 10</b>	Wednesday 5 January 2022 at 10.45am	Thursday 6 January 2022 at 10.45am
<b>Year 11</b>	Tuesday 4 January 2022 at 9.45am	Wednesday 5 January 2022 at 9.45am
<b>Eleos</b>	Wednesday 5 January 2022 at 10.45am	Thursday 6 January 2022 at 9.00am
<b>Athena</b>	Self-test at home on Tuesday 4 January 2022	Wednesday 5 January 2022 at 8.30am
<b>Synergy</b>	Self-test at home on Tuesday 4 January 2022	Wednesday 5 January 2022 at 8.30am

In order to ensure we have your most up to date preferences about testing in school, please scan the QR code to let school know if you consent for your child to be tested. If you do not consent for your child to be tested in school, they will not attend school until the return date in the table above.

Please note that students attending school for testing only are not required to wear uniform.



Children who are entitled to free school meals will be provided with an appropriate alternative. Please could I ask that parents or carers who choose not to consent, but have children entitled to free school meals contact school reception with their details by 2.30pm on Tuesday 4 January 2022 so we can ensure an alternative is in place for the following day.

### **Self-isolation period**

Students who test positive for Covid-19 will now self-isolate for seven days, providing they have a negative LFD result on day 6 and day 7. Students who are a close contact of a person who tests positive for Covid-19 should take an LFD test every day for seven days and providing the tests are negative and the student has no symptoms, they should continue to attend school as normal.

### **Exams and assessments in January**

The Department for Education is advising all planned exams and assessments should take place.

### **Remote education**

There is a recognition that high rates of Covid-19 may cause difficulties with staffing in school. This is clearly something that we will monitor carefully, but I feel it prudent to share with you at this current stage that it is highly likely that some form of flexible teaching might be required sooner rather than later. This could involve combining some classes and looking at some form of remote learning, although this will be as a last resort and not a decision taken lightly.

### **Vaccination and immunisation**

The NHS will communicate with you about how children aged 12-15 years old are able to get their boosters shortly. I will be offering the use of the school site to the Vaccination Team out of school hours and at the weekend. Please note this is not organised by the school, so you will deal directly with the NHS vaccination team.

I hope you have all enjoyed a wonderful family break and I am confident that together we will overcome all barriers to make this our best ever year.

Best wishes



**Mrs Joanne Wilson**  
**Principal**

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