

4th January 2022

Dear Parent/Carer

I hope that you all had a safe and restful Christmas and New Year. Our return this year is once more being negatively impacted by Covid and as I write we have 7 members of staff absent, in addition to which a number of students have already tested positive today either at home or following the tests being carried out in school.

As you may well have heard the pressures facing schools are significant, but we do have contingency plans in place and I have outlined these for you below, hopefully we will not need to implement them. To minimise the risk of restricted attendance, we will maintain the measures we have in school around ventilation, hand sanitisation and face coverings as well as implementing the new government guidance of requesting students to wear face coverings in classrooms as well as in communal areas.

We will avoid unnecessary gatherings of large groups of students, for example an assembly, but will not introduce any further restrictions unless advised to do so by local Public Health or by the government.

Can I also ask that you maintain twice weekly testing in line with government guidance for students attending secondary schools as this will help reduce the possibility of an outbreak. Guidance on self-isolation is as follows:

- Any student who is symptomatic should self-isolate and have a PCR test.
- A confirmatory PCR test is required if your child tests positive on a lateral flow test.
- Students should self-isolate for a minimum of 7 days if they test positive on a PCR.
- Students should conduct a lateral flow test on day 6 and day 7 and if both are negative they are able to return to school. If the test is positive, then they will need to continue to self-isolate for the full 10 days.
- Students who live in a household or who have been in close contact with an individual who tests positive should take a lateral flow test every day for 7 days, if all are negative they can remain in school during this time.

Please contact the school if your child has negative tests on day 6 and 7 so that we know to expect them back into school on day 8.

Full guidance can be found [here](#). Please note that the use of lateral flow tests has now been advised for students who have had Covid within the last 90 days.

The potential for disruption this term could either come from an outbreak, or more likely due to staff shortage. We have planned to respond at 3 different levels:

Level 1 – individual students isolating due to a positive test.

Level 2 – Restricted attendance for year group(s).

Level 3 – Restricted attendance for all year groups.

There are a huge number of variables in each level, but the one constant is that work will be set for students who are unable to come to school and it is the expectation that they complete that work unless they are too unwell to do so.

From now on we will expect students who are isolating to check in with their teachers at the start of each lesson and submit the work they have completed. The check in is simply a message in the lesson chat on Google Classroom and then any work can be uploaded, which the teacher will acknowledge. This will be monitored by teachers and your child's Head of Year as we want to ensure that students unfortunate enough to be absent through Covid are not disadvantaged compared to their peers.

Our planning for any possible disruption means that we have also identified students who will be invited into school during any period of restricted attendance as was the case in the last lockdown. If we enter a period of restricted access, then you will be informed if your child falls into this category.

We are also required to provide face to face provision for children of critical workers in the event of restricted attendance. This may prove to be challenging if we are short of staff so would ask you to consider carefully and have a conversation with your child's Head of Year if you feel a place may be needed. An up to date critical worker list is available [here](#). We will keep a record of requests and prioritise students if staffing becomes an issue.

Finally, we have also used information previously collected to identify students who may need a Chromebook for any period out of school that is related to Covid. A Google Form to collect this information will be sent out to parents of Year 7 students this week. Ideally a student needs full access to a laptop, PC or tablet to complete their work, a phone is not adequate. Please contact the school if your child does not have access to one of these and a Chromebook will be delivered to your home at the start of the period of isolation or restricted attendance. Whilst we do have a large stock, we may need to prioritise if requests outstrip demand.

I hope that we will not have to implement these plans, but rest assured that we will do all we can to minimise any further disruption to your child's education that has been caused by the pandemic.

Best wishes

Jonathan Heath
Headteacher