

29th November 2021

Dear Parents, Carers and Students

Some significant changes to update you on this week, the first two are both brought about by a change in advice from the DfE.

Masks.

I was advised yesterday that, along with the requirement to wear masks in shops and on public transport, schools are now required to ensure that everyone on site wears a mask in communal areas. I have also asked teachers to ensure students are wearing masks in lessons unless doing so would have a significant, detrimental impact on learning or teaching. This is to protect all the community from all transmission, but in particular any spread of the new omicron variant, until its possible impact can be determined. Students should be bringing a mask in from home. Please can you ensure that your child has a spare mask with them everyday in case they need to change the mask they are wearing. Students will be required to wear masks on school and public transport until further notice.

Start of Term 3

We are now being asked to test all students before they return to lessons in January. To this end we will need to stagger the start of the new term slightly.

Consent provided previously will cover these tests.

NB: Parents of students who have not previously provided consent will receive a separate email. If you do not wish your child to be tested and do not receive this email by the end of this week or you wish to withdraw your consent please complete this short [Google Form](#). Please be assured that if consent has not been provided, and your child makes this clear to us, then no test will be administered.

All students should enter the school via the lower canteen. The cohorts should return to school at the following times:

Year 11 - Tuesday 4th January at 8.30am (the start of the maths mock exam will be delayed by 1hour until 10am to allow all students to be tested beforehand)

Year 9 - Tuesday 4th January at 10.30am

Year 10 - Tuesday 4th January at 1.30 pm

Year 7 - Wednesday 5th January at 9 am

Year 8 - Wednesday 5th January at 10am

As previously, if students have no alternative transport to school they can get their normal bus on the day when they are now due to return. There will be a significant amount of waiting around so all students will need to bring a reading book and they are expected to read in silence while waiting for their test or result. If the weather is dry they will, in all likelihood, be asked to wait outside until we are able to test them and should therefore dress warmly.

Home Testing

Students should continue to test at home twice a week - no consent is required for this and students can test at home even if they are not being tested in school. Students should continue to test twice a week over the Christmas holiday. If someone has tested positive with a PCR test, they should not be tested again using either PCR or rapid lateral flow tests for 90 days, unless they develop new symptoms during this time – in which case they should be retested immediately using a PCR test. This 90-day period is from the initial onset of symptoms or, if asymptomatic when tested, their positive test result.

Please do talk to your children about the precautions we should all be taking to reduce transmission as much as possible. The last thing anyone wants is another spike in cases just before Christmas!

We plan to proceed with all other events as planned. However, I would like to reinforce the expectation that all visitors to the school complete a Lateral Flow Test before coming on to the premises.

Finally, as always, thanks to students, families, staff and governors for the support and compliance we always get when introducing these measures that are always done with the sole intention of keeping everyone protected through the pandemic.

Kind regards

Simon Bamford
Headteacher