



Our Ref: DJ

Date: 4th January 2022

Dear Parent/Carer,

Firstly I would like to wish you and your family a Happy New Year. I hope that you managed to have an enjoyable time over Christmas and that the opportunity to meet friends and family was a positive after last year.

I wanted to get in touch to provide you an update ahead of students returning over the next two days.

As you will be aware from the media, the new coronavirus variant is spreading rapidly which is causing a great deal of disruption across society due in large part to self-isolation requirements.

Current staffing levels

Burnside has already been significantly affected by these issues. Around 10-15% of staff are currently self-isolating and this is already presenting challenges in opening the school normally to all students this week. Currently we are working hard to open as planned, but this will be kept under review pending any further staff absence.

This situation is made more difficult by the fact that there is also limited availability of temporary teaching staff from supply agencies.

As rates of transmission do not look likely to decrease in the short term, It is likely that we will not be able to stay open to **all year groups** for face to face teaching **at all times** in the coming weeks.

Closing the school to one or more year groups would only be done as a last resort and in that situation we would put in place remote learning. This would be the same format as previous lockdowns where students attend their full lesson online with their teacher, following their normal timetable. This would not be '*home schooling*', and students will not miss out on learning.

If your child does not have access to a device, or the internet, at home please contact your child's progress leader so that we can support with this.

In the coming weeks our priority will be to ensure that students due to sit exams in the summer (years 11 & 13) can continue to attend school in person for face to face teaching.

Face Coverings

A reminder that **students are expected to wear a face covering in busy communal areas** where they are coming into contact with high numbers of other people. This means that students will need to be wearing a face covering when in corridors, or dining areas. This requirement was already in place before Christmas so all students are aware of this.

Please ensure that your child attends school with an appropriate, clean face covering each day. This should be a **recognised face covering** and not an item of clothing (scarf or snood etc) pulled up.

In updated guidance over the weekend, **the government has recommended that students in secondary schools also wear face coverings in classrooms.**

We would ask that all students who are able to do so follow this guidance and wear their face covering sensibly and responsibly in classrooms. I would encourage parents to talk to your children about making sensible decisions that help to protect themselves and others.

I would like to remind parents that we have retained a number of measures this year (such as 100 minute lessons and fixed seating plans) which means that there is less movement around the building, and far fewer contacts during the day for staff and students.

Self Isolation

A reminder of the updated guidance around self-isolation:


- Those over the age of 5 who test positive are now able to end self-isolation **after day 7** if they test negative on a lateral flow test on both day 6 and day 7. Please remember that **day 0** is either the day that symptoms started, or the date of a positive test if there were no symptoms. Further guidance can be found on the [NHS website](#).

- 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 a lateral flow test 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.

Finally, please ensure that you do not send your child into school if they are currently displaying symptoms of COVID-19. Please contact the school absence line as per policy to inform the school.

I look forward to welcoming students back this week and will communicate promptly to parents should there be any changes to the normal running of the school.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "D Jamieson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'D'.

Mr D Jamieson
Headteacher