

January 2022

Dear Parent / Carer

I hope you and your family have enjoyed the festive break and I would like to take this opportunity to wish you a happy New Year.

The purpose of this letter is to confirm arrangements for the start of term. School will open for all pupils on **Wednesday 5th January**.

Start of term arrangements

In order to support the return to school, we have scheduled testing to take place on a staggered basis so that as little learning time is lost as possible.

Year groups	Date of testing
Years 10, 11, 12 & 13	<p>Tuesday 4th January You will need to book a timeslot on our booking website (this is open to Years 10 to 13 only). Pupils should only attend for their booked appointment time. Please contact the school office if you have any difficulties booking your slot)</p> <p>A limited number of testing slots will be available on Wednesday 5th January for pupils who are genuinely unable to attend for a slot on Tuesday 4th January (e.g. those pupils requiring the scholars buses to get to school)</p>
Years 7, 8 & 9	<p>Wednesday 5th January Pupils will be tested in school</p>

If your child is still under 16 and you object to them self-administering a test under the guidance of school staff, please email jmcmeiken@whickhamschool.org by 8.00am on Monday 3rd January 2022. Your previous consent form stands unless we have your emailed objection. If your child has recently joined the school or you have not previously consented and now wish to do so please fill in the appropriate form below.

For those who will be aged 16 or over on the date of their first test, they should complete the consent form themselves. Further information relating to testing is attached to this letter.

- [Parent consent for students under 16 years of age](#)
- [Student consent if aged over 16](#)
- [Sixth Form student consent to Covid testing](#)

School routines

You will be aware that the Government updated Covid guidance for schools on 2nd January and now requires all children (except those with valid exemptions) in Years 7 and above to wear masks during lessons. Please support us in putting this measure into place through explaining this to your son or daughter and ensuring they have a face covering (**please ensure your child also brings a spare**).

During the first week of term I will be reviewing our Risk Assessment and ensuring any additional information from Public Health England and the Government are taken into account in evaluating the measures we have in place to maximise safety and support effective learning. I will communicate any changes in due course but would like to take this opportunity to remind you of the key measures we have in place and ask you to support us in ensuring your son or daughter adheres to these requirements.

- Face coverings are mandatory in communal areas and lessons unless there is a valid exemption in place
- Pupils must wear face coverings when using Scholar buses
- Forward facing seating in classrooms is in place
- Our lesson routines require pupils to sanitize their hands at the start and end of lessons
- Pupil assemblies will be held via Teams
- Good ventilation of classrooms and indoor areas is a priority. Please ensure your child brings a jacket to school so they can wear this if they feel cold.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely

Mr F Turnbull
Headteacher

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Further information about COVID testing

Rationale for COVID testing

- Up to one third of people who have coronavirus are asymptomatic. By testing we will help to reduce the spread in school and college settings through asymptomatic transmission. However tests are not compulsory, and students are not prevented from returning to school if they choose not to consent to testing.
- Students for whom consent is given for testing, will have one COVID test in school on their return.

How the tests work

- Testing in school for those without coronavirus symptoms use COVID-19 tests known as 'lateral flow devices', which provide a result in around 30 minutes.
- Those taking the test will be supervised by trained staff and volunteers. The lateral flow tests are quick and easy to undertake, using a swab of the nose and throat. We will inform the student and parents/carers of a positive test result. You can also receive a text or email notification of a positive or negative result from the online NHS system if you are registered on the system within 24 hours of the test taking place. Students will be given a registration card at the time of their test to enable you to do this. Tests are free of charge.

What if my child tests positive?

- If a student tests positive on a lateral flow device, they will be informed immediately by school and you will need to arrange for them to self-isolate for 7 days (and up to 10) and follow the guidance from NHS Test and Trace. If lateral flow tests taken on day 6 and 7 of isolation are negative then the student can return to school on day 7.

What happens if the test is negative?

- While a small number of students may need to repeat the test if the first test was invalid or void for some reason, students who test negative will be able to stay in school and resume their activities as normal. You can also receive a text or email notification of a positive or negative result from the online NHS system if you are registered on the system within 24 hours of the test taking place.

What if my child develops symptoms?

- This testing programme at school is for people with no symptoms. If your child develops symptoms at any time (including a high temperature; a new, continuous cough; or a loss or change to their sense of smell or taste) they must immediately self-isolate, and book a test by calling 119 or visiting <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>.