



13<sup>th</sup> December 2021

Dear Parent/Guardian,

I am writing to confirm arrangements over the next few weeks and for the start of the new term.

After the holidays, all pupils will return to school on **Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> January 2022 at 8.20am.**

### **COVID-19 testing for pupils over the holidays**

Pupils are encouraged to follow general public health advice and continue to test when at risk, i.e. in situations where they are more likely to catch or spread COVID-19. This includes if they spend time in crowded and enclosed spaces or before visiting people who are at higher risk of severe illness if they catch COVID-19.

### **COVID-19 arrangements from January**

During the second term, the school will continue to take steps to minimise the risk of infection. This includes:

- Rapid testing will be offered to all pupils before they return to school. Please read more details below.
- There will continue to be increased ventilation in classrooms and enhanced cleaning, including regular disinfection of frequently touched surfaces.
- Pupils will be encouraged to wash their hands and use sanitiser regularly.
- Pupils will be asked to wear a face covering when:
  - Travelling to and from school, particularly on our school bus.
  - During assemblies and when moving around the premises, outside of classrooms, such as in corridors and communal areas.

### **Pupils who test positive for COVID-19**

- Pupils who have one of the three main COVID-19 symptoms (persistent cough, high temperature, loss or change of taste/smell) must isolate at home and get a PCR test immediately.
- The result of the test should be shared with the school.
- If a pupil tests positive, they will isolate in line with guidance from NHS Test and Trace.
- Asymptomatic pupils who test positive with a Rapid Lateral Flow test (either in school or at home) must isolate at home immediately and get a PCR test within 2 days to confirm the result.

### **COVID-19 testing when pupils return to school in January**

The government has asked schools to offer all pupils one Rapid Lateral Flow test when they return to school in January. A second test should then be taken at home 3-4 days after the first test. Twice weekly home testing will continue from week two.



The first test will be carried out by the pupils themselves in school under the supervision of trained staff. The results are available within 30 minutes and will be shared directly with parents. Testing is not mandatory, but I would strongly encourage all pupils to take part in order to help protect all of our learners, staff and families. Along with the other protective measures we are taking, these tests will help pupils to remain in school safely.

All participating pupils should take two tests during the first week back.

- The first test will be in school on **Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> January 2022** from **10.00am to 3.00pm**.
- The second test should be taken at home on **Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> or Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> January 2022**.

If you are happy for your child to be tested, please complete the consent form by **Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> December**.

For pupils in Year 7 to Year 11, please complete the electronic consent form <https://bit.ly/sscovidconsent>

The privacy notice relating to information collected and retained as part of testing is available on the school website.

#### **Ongoing home testing (twice a week)**

After the initial test in school followed by the home test during the first week back, the government has asked that pupils then continue with twice-weekly testing at home in line with current guidance.

Pupils who agree to home testing will be provided with testing kits for January.

#### **Omicron variant**

The new Omicron variant of COVID-19 has been identified as a variant of concern. Any close contact of someone who has tested positive for the COVID-19 Omicron variant is legally required to isolate for 10 days from the point of last contact. This is regardless of age and vaccination status. Close contacts linked to the COVID-19 Omicron variant will be informed by the local health protection team or NHS Test and Trace if they fall into this category and they will then be provided with details about self-isolation.

We really appreciate your support with this. If you have any concerns or queries, or need support in any way, please contact the school.

Please remember the school in your prayers.

Yours faithfully



Gaetano Ferrante

Principal