



COVID-19 Update

Dear Parents

I was, on Friday, going to write that I shall reduce the frequency of my whole school emails – I'm glad I didn't as, yet again, I find I need to communicate with all members of the school community more quickly than I had anticipated.

Face coverings

On Saturday 27 November, the Prime Minister [announced](#) new temporary measures following the emergence of the Omicron variant of COVID-19 in the country. As a result, the Department for Education has informed us that the wearing of face coverings is once again mandatory for all staff, visitors and pupils in secondary schools in all communal areas unless individuals are exempt. Additionally, pupils should continue to wear face coverings on public and dedicated school transport. At the moment, the wearing of face coverings in classrooms is not compulsory, although pupils and staff may do so if they wish.

Testing

We have also been asked to encourage pupils to continue to test twice weekly using lateral flow device (LFD) tests. During the last week, we have seen a rise in the number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 within the school community. However, the rate is still very low compared with just before the half-term break.

We are likely to have to test all pupils on their return to school in January and are currently in the process of planning how this will happen.

Contract tracing and isolation

The [current guidance on contact tracing and isolation](#) remains in place. However, any suspected or confirmed close contacts of the Omicron variant will be asked to isolate for 10 days regardless of vaccination status or age. Close contacts will be informed by NHS Track and Trace. We will, of course, assist with this process should this be necessary.

The government has informed us that the new measures have been introduced as a precaution to slow down the spread of the variant while they gather more information and that they will continue to keep these under review as the situation develops. We will continue to do our very best to put in place measures to ensure the safety of every member of the school community. We will carry on with our rigorous cleaning regime following the guidance for the cleaning of non-healthcare settings and the other recommended protective measures. To help reduce the spread, we will continue to remind all members of the school community to wash their hands with soap and water often for at least 20 seconds, use hand sanitiser gel if soap and water are not available, cover their mouths and noses with a tissue or their sleeves (not their hands) when they cough or sneeze and put used tissues in the bin immediately and wash their hands afterwards.

I know there are likely to be some implications for our extra-curricular programme and the planned end-of-term events. For the time being, the intention is that they will go ahead. However, we will, of course keep this under review bearing in mind that the course of the pandemic and subsequent government guidance can change rapidly.

I continue to express my gratitude for your forbearance and support during what continues to be a challenging period for us all.

Yours sincerely

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HEADMASTER

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