



3rd December 2021

Dear Parents/Carers

I am sure you are aware that the Government have introduced some new measures following the emergence of the Omicron variant of COVID-19 in the UK. This includes some specific guidance for schools that we will be implementing to ensure we keep people safe and continue to provide the best possible educational experience for all pupils.

Face coverings have been reintroduced in all schools for children in Year 7 upwards unless they are exempt. It is a requirement that these are worn in corridors and indoor communal spaces. **Please ensure your child comes to school every day with a face covering.** Although it is not currently required by the Government, should an individual wish to wear their face covering in a classroom, we are happy to support their decision.

We strongly encourage you to support your child in taking twice weekly lateral flow tests (LFT) and report all results to the [NHS](#). Home testing is quick and ensures we prevent any individuals who may have the virus coming to school and passing it on to another person. If your child has a positive LFT, they must not attend school and seek a PCR test immediately. It remains the case that anyone who has any of the three main symptoms of COVID-19 (a high temperature, new continuous cough, or a loss of taste and/or smell) must stay at home and seek a PCR test immediately.

Anyone who receives a positive PCR test result must stay at home and self-isolate in line with [current guidance](#). In addition to this, any suspected or confirmed close contacts of the Omicron variant will be asked to self-isolate regardless of vaccination status or age. In this instance you will be contacted directly by NHS Test and Trace and told to self-isolate. Please also inform the school immediately if this is the case.

Over the Christmas holiday, all pupils are asked to continue to test twice a week at home and report the result to the NHS. We will be distributing home testing kits to ensure children are able to do this. The Government has also asked schools to set up an Asymptomatic Test Site at school and test children when they return to school in January. This is to identify any positive cases before lessons begin in the new term. Government guidance allows schools to stagger the return of pupils to allow testing to happen in the safest possible way. We will confirm arrangements with testing and start dates for each year group before the end of this term.

If you have previously provided consent for your child to take a LFT at school (either in March or September this year), we will be planning for them to take a test in school in January. If you have previously provided consent, but do not wish your child to take a test in January, then please contact the main school office. If you have not provided consent previously, but would like your child to complete a test in school in January, please complete the [parental consent form](#) before midday on Thursday 9th December.

The School Immunisation Team has now delivered the first COVID vaccine to all eligible children whose parents provided positive consent. If your child did not received the vaccine in school, they can also be booked online through [the NHS website](#), or by going to a [walk-in vaccination centre](#). Further information for parents of 12-15 year olds [can be found here](#).

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Currently the number of confirmed COVID cases in school is very low. Therefore, we do expect all other pupils to be attending school every day. It is crucial that children do not miss any more of their education than absolutely necessary. The Government is very clear that schools should follow existing arrangements for tackling absence, including fixed penalty notices. We will be following this approach if necessary, but we are also here to help, and would always encourage you to contact us at school if you need any support with your child's attendance.

Once again, please could I remind you of the importance of your child having correct school uniform including a warm coat. Public Health Advice continues to state it is important we ensure the school is well ventilated and therefore windows and doors will remain open. To ensure your child is prepared for the cooler weather we would recommend that children have:

- a plain black V-neck jumper beneath their blazer. A hoodie is not a substitute for a jumper.
- a 'base layer' such as a vest or plain t-shirt under their school shirt in addition, or as an alternative, to their jumper.
- a warm (preferably waterproof) coat or outer layer to wear over their blazer outdoors and in the classroom in extreme circumstances.

It is not anticipated that wearing a coat in the classroom will be required. However, school staff will be balancing the need to maintain ventilation whilst providing advice and support to pupils. We appreciate your understanding with this matter and please do not hesitate to contact school if you would like to talk about your child's circumstances.

Due to ongoing measures in school, unfortunately we will not be able to offer pupils the full traditional Christmas dinner this year. However, on Wednesday 8th December and 15th December, our catering team will be offering a roast dinner with some Christmas favourites included! Pupils can purchase any of these items in the normal way using their daily allowance on ParentPay. The usual range of food will also be available on these days, and a range of festive treats may also be provided throughout the next couple of weeks.

Our Year 8 Student Councillors have launched a 'Santa Dash Challenge' over the coming week. This involves tutor groups collecting as many food items as possible for the local church and social supermarket food bank. Any food items that are non-perishable (e.g. tinned food, pasta, jars, cereals, toiletries) would be welcome. Children can bring in items and pass them to their form tutor in the morning. Thank you in advance for any support you may be able to provide.

Staffordshire's Children and Family Services would value parental thoughts and views on how they are working what their future should be. If you would like to contribute then please find details accompanying this update. Please also find information about the Staffordshire Parent Carer Forum that aims to represent the experiences of children and adults (0-25) with special educational needs and disabilities and their families.

We will be following the Government guidance for schools and we will stay open until the final day of term on Friday 17th December. I will be sending out further details regards the final day of term, along with plans for the start of the spring term, as soon as arrangements have been confirmed. Please do not hesitate to contact school if you have any questions or need any support. Take care.

Yours sincerely



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