

4th January 2022

Dear parents, carers and students

Happy new year to you all. I hope you have had a good break. We have waited until today before sending you all an update on how we will approach the start of term just in case there were any further government changes or requirements.

School will open as planned on Wednesday 5th January. Students should arrive via their designated entrance gate at the slightly later time of 10.55am and go straight to their tutor rooms.

We will continue to use Covid mitigation systems and follow government guidance to protect the school community and their families. Our aim is to run the academic curriculum and extracurricular activities as normal. However, we will need to respond to issues as they arise, including new requirements regarding masks and higher than normal levels of staff and student Covid cases. Here is our updated information:

Masks: It is essential that every student remembers to bring a supply of clean masks to school. Recent guidance asks that all students wear masks for most of the day - in classrooms, corridors, queues and communal areas (other than when eating). They do not need to be worn outdoors. We will encourage students to spend time outdoors at break and lunch times. Students will be reminded how to use their masks safely but please go through this with them at home too.

Classrooms: Classrooms will continue to be as well ventilated as we are able, and our heating will be on. Although students are required to wear their usual school uniform, teachers will permit students to wear their outdoor coats in classrooms if the rooms are cold. Please ensure all students are in the correct uniform and bring a warm coat to school.

Testing: Testing is more important than ever to keep school open. We have been asked by the government to supplement your home testing with on-site testing at the start of term. To do this we will require the following from all students in years 7-13:

Tomorrow, on the morning of Wednesday 5th January, all students must conduct a lateral flow test prior to coming to school. We ask for your support in ensuring this takes place. If the result is positive, then students must remain at home. They will need to isolate and book a PCR test through the NHS website.

In school on Wednesday 5th and Thursday 6th January, all consented students will be tested again in our onsite testing hub. In the event of a student testing positive, parents will be contacted to collect them and a PCR test should be booked.

On Saturday 8th January, in accordance with government guidance, all students must complete a further lateral flow test at home. If this is positive, then they must isolate and book a PCR test.

From Monday 10th January, all students will be required to test themselves at home twice a week using the lateral flow tests provided by the school.

Principal: Nigel Clemens BSc, MA

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No student should come to school if they have Covid symptoms (cough/loss of smell/taste) or if they have cold symptoms as Omicron can present like a cold. Students should stay at home if they are unwell and book a PCR test. Please follow the usual school absence reporting procedures if your child is absent from school.

Other measures: To avoid transmission of Covid and any disease, students should wash their hands regularly and use hand sanitizer in school. Please ensure your son/daughter carries hand sanitizer and tissues. These are vital as part of the Catch It-Bin It-Kill It guidance that we will reinforce to students.

Self-isolation: Microsoft Teams will be used if a student is isolating at home and is well, and they should attend any lesson/tutor time via the platform. If they are unable to access this, they should ring the school immediately.

Should any guidance or the school's circumstances change, we will advise you in the normal way. We hope that school can continue as normally as possible for everyone. We have some exciting events and activities to look forward to inside and outside the classroom in 2022.

I hope this year will be a happy year for you all.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'N B Clemens', written over a horizontal line.

N B Clemens
Principal