

6 July 2021

Dear Parents

Please see below a very brief summary of the announcements made today regarding Covid 19 and its implications for schools.

Prime Minister's announcement and schools operational guidance from Stage 4

- *At Step 4 and after the end of the summer term, it will no longer be necessary to keep children in consistent groups ('bubbles'). This means bubbles will not need to be used for any summer provision (for example, summer schools) or in schools from the autumn term*
- *Schools and settings will only need to do contact tracing up to 18th July 2021. From 19th July 2021 (Step 4), close contacts will be identified via NHS Test and Trace.*
- *From 16 August 2021, children under the age of 18 years old will no longer be required to self-isolate if they are contacted by NHS Test and Trace as a close contact of a positive COVID-19 case.*
- *From step 4, face coverings will no longer be advised for pupils, students, staff and visitors either in classrooms or in communal areas. From Step 4, face coverings are also no longer recommended to be worn on dedicated transport to school or college.*

Asymptomatic testing

As pupils will potentially mix with lots of other people during the summer holidays, all secondary school pupils and students should receive two on-site lateral flow device tests, 3-5 days apart, on their return in September. Settings may stagger the return of pupils across the first week to manage this. Pupils should then continue to test twice weekly at home until the end of September, when this will be reviewed.

As a result of these announcements the situation remains the same until the 19 July, students who are in close contact with individuals who test positive will be asked to self-isolate. We are seeing an increasing number of positive cases at present and please be assured we are attempting to minimise the number of students we send home. After the 19th July, if your child were to test positive please do not feel the need to tell the school but contact NHS Test and Trace and in theory, they will identify close contacts. I am not sure how this will be achieved as individuals under the age of 16 are not meant to have the NHS Test and Trace app, but these are the new guidelines.

We will be distributing Lateral Flow Test kits this week to cover the period to the end of the term. The use of Lateral Flow Tests has been suspended over the summer, but the kits are available from pharmacists for those who wish to continue with them.

In September we shall stagger the start of the term to allow LFD testing as students arrive and I shall publish details of this shortly. I am hoping this testing will be completed with minimal disruption to the start of the year. We shall presume all previous decisions regarding consent for LFD are still valid unless parents inform us otherwise.

I hope that after the initial testing we can return to relative normality which will be a refreshing change.

Best wishes



David Collins