

5th January 2022.

Dear Parent/Carer,

I would like to take the opportunity to wish you and your families all the best for 2022.

I am writing to welcome you back to the new term and to outline some key points about the return to school given the situation with the Omicron variant of Covid-19. We are doing all we can to try to ensure as many students as possible can attend school and appreciate your support with this.

- We are asking that all pupils take an LFT at home every Wednesday and Sunday and if this is positive that they do not attend school and book a PCR test. This is particularly important if family members or close contacts have had Covid recently. If they have any symptoms, they should not attend and book a PCR test as LFT tests are to identify asymptomatic cases and are not always effective for people with Covid-19 symptoms.
- We have been asked by the DFE to offer an on-site test to all pupils. If tests have been taken at home as above this will provide a 'belt and braces' approach to try to ensure all pupils with a positive result can be identified. If you have recently had Covid the NHS advice is that:

“Even if someone has tested positive for COVID-19 within the last 90 days, they are strongly encouraged to take part in LFT testing on-site or at home once they have completed their isolation period for their prior infection.”

Consents given previously can be used and we have these in our system, but if you did not give consent and would now like to please let us know.

- Given the increased transmission of this variant we need to maintain our Covid rules in school and we will be re-visiting these with students in form time. It is important that everybody in our school community follows these rules.
- As you will have probably seen in the news, the DFE has asked that pupils return to wearing face coverings in classrooms as a temporary measure. We will be asking all students who are not exempt to do this (as they did previously, following the return to school last March). We will be reminding pupils that this is to try to minimise the transmission of Covid and keep their classmates and teachers safe but also that some people are exempt for valid reasons and that we all need to remember to be understanding and kind as we get through this stage of the pandemic together. This is in addition to wearing them on corridors and transport. It would be best if pupils

brought their own re-usable cloth masks as these are more comfortable to wear, better for the environment and will avoid school having to purchase more masks. These should be washed regularly. School will provide masks where students have forgotten or lost them.

- It is widely anticipated that the biggest challenge in schools will be staffing levels. As we return to school we have some members of staff isolating with a positive Covid-19 test. Currently, this is not at a level where we need to use contingency plans – but we have these should we need to introduce them. We will do our best to maintain face to face teaching but I would ask for your understanding where students do not have their ‘normal’ teacher and in the event that we have to ask any groups of pupils to learn remotely to manage the school site safely.

As ever, throughout this pandemic, I am grateful for your understanding and support as we work together to do our very best for our young people.

As far as possible, school will try and carry out the events planned for the term including:

- Work with the local Conservation Trust at Scotsman Flash;
- Environment Day;
- Diversity Day;
- Work at Greenslate Farm.

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