

22 September 2021



Dear Parent/Carer

I am pleased to say that, so far, the start of term has been very smooth and calm. It has been a pleasure for us, the staff, to welcome back the students and to witness their evident enthusiasm for a return to near normal. The Government has made it clear that it expects schools to operate as normally as possible and to put learning first, and that is what we are doing.

So far this year we have had a Year 13 Conference, a visit from the Army, a Year 6 open evening and a Year 6 open morning, and it is great to be welcoming people into our school again.

There have, of course, been some cases of Covid-19 in school since the beginning of term – but please let us be clear, at present there are cases of Covid everywhere and it would be strange indeed if there was not the odd case in school. In each case please be assured that the school is following the guidance laid down for us by the Department for Education and Public Health England.

We do still have some protective measures in place in school:

- classrooms are still arranged in rows facing forwards;
- windows and doors are still being kept open to aid ventilation;
- hand sanitiser is still available in every room;
- one-way systems are still in place in congested areas such as stair wells;
- people can wear masks in the corridors if they wish and students in special circumstances and with prior permission can wear masks in the classroom too;
- we are fully cooperating with all published guidance and the Test and Trace system.

However, one of the biggest things that will help to minimise the number of Covid cases in school is if all students continue to do Lateral Flow Tests at home twice per week and continue to be vigilant for symptoms of Covid. We would ask parents to ensure that the tests are happening and, if your son or daughter has a positive test result, to immediately organise a PCR test and not send them into school until either:

- the PCR test result is returned as negative;
- the student has self-isolated for 10 days (if the PCR test is positive); or
- the student has fully recovered if he/she became ill from Covid having had a positive PCR test result and needed more than the 10 days.

If, for whatever reason, you do not have any Lateral Flow Tests at home, please let us know and we can provide some.

PCR tests can be arranged here [Get a free PCR test to check if you have coronavirus \(COVID-19\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk) or by calling 119.

We would also ask parents to continue to be mindful of the symptoms of Covid and not send their child to school if they have any symptoms – even if they have a negative Lateral Flow Test result. If your child has symptoms you should, please, not send them to school and arrange for a PCR test as soon as possible. They should not return to school until a negative PCR test has been received or, in the case of a positive result, until after a 10-day isolation period.

The symptoms of Covid are:

- a new, continuous cough
- a high temperature
- a loss of, or change in, their normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia).

If somebody in your household has Covid, your child is still allowed to come to school provided they are symptom free (we would also recommend doing a Lateral Flow Test). However, this only applies to school children and adults who are fully vaccinated – other members of your household will still need to self-isolate.

Apart from the above, students are only required to self-isolate from school if they have been told to by Test and Trace. If you think your child is a close contact, but has not have not been contacted directly by NHS Test and Trace, please follow the guidance provided here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-contacts-of-people-with-possible-or-confirmed-coronavirus-covid-19-infection-who-do-not-live-with-the-person/guidance-for-contacts-of-people-with-possible-or-confirmed-coronavirus-covid-19-infection-who-do-not-live-with-the-person#i-think-i-have-had-contact-with-someone-who-has-tested-positive-for-covid-19-but-i-have-not-been-notified-and-advised-to-self-isolate-what-should-i-do>

You may have also heard on the news about the Covid vaccine being offered to 12 to 15 year olds (students aged 16 or over can already have one in the normal way) and that this will be done through the school. As yet, the school has not been approached about how or when this will happen. We will let you know as soon as we know more. I can assure you that this will be run by external and trained staff and we are simply providing the venue and helping to organise the students, as we do with other vaccination programmes. The choice about whether to have the vaccine or not is down to you and your child and we will not be forcing anyone to have it. Further information about vaccinations in schools can be found here:

[COVID-19 vaccination programme for children and young people: guidance for schools - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/covid-19-vaccination-programme-for-children-and-young-people-guidance-for-schools)

This leaflet has been written for students and parents:

[COVID-19 vaccination – A guide for children and young people \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/84444/covid-19-vaccination-a-guide-for-children-and-young-people)

It has also been reported that anti-vaccination protesters have been targeting their activity towards school children. Legally they have the right to conduct peaceful protests, which I would not wish to interfere with. However, if your child is approached or given leaflets (we have been informed that leaflets have been produced to look like official NHS literature) by anyone that causes you any concern, please do let us know.

Finally, I would like to finish by thanking you for the faith you continue to show in us in doing everything we can to educate your child whilst endeavouring to keep them safe. We will continue to do our very best.

Yours sincerely



Tracey Savage
Headteacher