

10 December 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

Further to my letter earlier this week, you will be aware the Prime Minister made a further announcement on Wednesday 15 December 2021. This detailed additional restrictions to help limit the further spread of Covid-19, particularly considering the reported Omicron variant. Whilst this most recent guidance does not stipulate any further restrictions for schools, I have again reviewed our risk assessments and procedures to ensure we can keep students, their families and staff as safe as possible.

Examinations

As we enter the second week of PPE exams for Year 11 students as well as planning for an external series of exams in January, we have taken further precautions as below:-

- Increased spacing between desks in exam venues
- We strongly advise students wear a facemask during the exams
- A deep clean of all examination venues will take place at the end of each day

Cleaning

We have further increased the regularity of cleaning across the site of the Academy.

Equipment

To help minimise the possible spread of Covid-19 between students, we strongly recommend that students bring their own equipment to school each day. The sharing of pens, pencils and other stationery is strongly discouraged. Any shared practical equipment used during lessons is cleaned after each activity.

Weekly Lateral Flow Tests

The Department of Education continues to recommend testing twice weekly, three to four days apart. As before, we strongly advise that all students and staff continue to complete Lateral Flow Tests twice weekly. Additional Lateral Flow Tests can be collected from the school office.

Lateral Flow Testing in January

As we approach the end of the Autumn term, we are in the process of planning for the safe return of all our students and staff in January. The Department for Education and Public Health England have outlined their plans for Lateral Flow Testing to take place, for all students prior to their return in the Spring term. The guidance states that students in secondary schools will be asked to take one Covid-19 test in school, to identify asymptomatic positive cases on return from the Christmas break.

Our priority remains to ensure we can resume education for all students as quickly as possible and we want to support the safe return to school for everyone. Please be assured that every effort will be made to minimise the disruption to our students' learning. Further details will be communicated before the end of term.

Christmas Concert

Events planned for the final week of term will be virtual. After considerable debate and risk assessment, I am deeply disappointed to announce that we have made the decision to cancel the Christmas Concert on Wednesday 15 December. This is not a decision we have taken lightly, and we appreciate how disappointing this may be for students and their families. Considering the recent increase in infections seen nationwide, we feel the risk to students and their families, particularly as we approach the Christmas holidays is too great.

We are, however, planning to record the event during the school day, where we will be able to maintain social distancing, ensuring the safety of students and staff. Details of the streamed performance will be communicated to you. My thanks to the students, staff and Church who have invested so much time and effort to ensure this event can still take place, albeit in a very different format.

Whilst writing, it is worth reminding you of the end of term arrangements. Term will finish at 12.30pm on Friday 17 December. Buses will collect at this time.

A full review will take place each day as we approach the end of term and the Christmas holiday. As ever, the safety and wellbeing of all our students, their families and our staff remain at the centre of all our decisions.

May I take the opportunity to thank you for your ongoing support.

Yours sincerely



David Wiltshire
Headteacher