



4th January 2022

Dear Parents, Carers and Students

A happy new year to you all! I hope that you had a restful, relaxing and healthy break over the festive period and you and those around you remain well.

I wanted to provide an update to highlight a few important matters relating to our return to school for Term 3 and make you aware of the very recent changes to the DfE Covid-19 guidance for schools. Within this letter:

- **Start of Term 3 Arrangements and Staggered Return for Students in January 2022 to accommodate LFD onsite test requirements**
- **Updated School Operating Guidance for Term 3**
- **Changes to the self-isolation period for individuals who test positive for COVID-19**
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Start of Term 3 Arrangements and Staggered Return for Students in January 2022 to accommodate LFD onsite test requirements

I am pleased to report that we are able to continue with the plans we put in place for our students' staggered return this week. You will be familiar with the schedule for our on-site LFD testing starting today with Years 11, 12 & 13 and plans remain unchanged for the other year group returns for the rest of the week; there are no changes to the programme I sent out in my letter at the end of last term.

There has been some ambiguity in the guidance about whether students who have tested positive in the last 90 days should now be LFD testing (including as part of the onsite testing). In line with the changes to self isolation that came into force on the 22nd December the guidance on LFD testing now states ***'even if someone has tested positive for COVID-19 within the last 90 days, they are strongly encouraged to take part in LFD testing on-site through ATS or at home once they have completed their isolation period for their prior infection.'***

We hope, once all students have returned after their tests on Friday that we can deliver as normal as experience as conditions allow. However, given the continued upsurge in Covid infections over the holiday break, we are likely to be faced with a couple of specific challenges in the coming weeks:

1. A significant level of staff absence – this could mean that we simply don't have enough staff to cover all classes, in which case we will have to ask one or more year-groups to switch to learning 'from home', potentially at short notice. Our priority for face-to-face learning will be for Year 11 and 13; other year-

groups could be asked to 'learn from home' on a rota basis (to reduce any impact on one particular year-group). If this did become necessary we would always accommodate more 'vulnerable' students where being in school was a priority, and staff would be in contact with families accordingly. If this approach is needed, we will inform you as soon as we know of any potential disruption.

2. A significant level of student absence due to Covid isolation – as well as the issue of students missing their face to face education this adds very considerable burden on teaching staff, who need to provide work for those isolating at home in addition to their usual teaching, planning and assessment load. Please be patient with staff if resources are not quite as they should be. We encourage students to follow their usual timetable to structure their day and to complete the work set in the time available. Students should also complete homework tasks to the best of their ability, although it is likely that some tasks may be harder to complete having not been in the relevant lesson. Absent students will not be penalised where this is the case.

Updated School Operating Guidance for Term 3

As you may have seen in the news on Sunday, the government has introduced further temporary control measures to all schools in England due to the current COVID-19 case numbers and the Omicron variant, which will come into force today. These measures are designed to further protect face-to-face education, and will be reviewed on 26th January as part of the government's wider review of the current Plan B measures. The control measure changes relate to face coverings, contact tracing and self-isolation, all detailed below.

Changes to the self-isolation period for individuals who test positive for COVID-19

Since Wednesday 22 December, the 10 day self-isolation period for people who record a positive PCR test result for COVID-19 has been reduced to 7 days in most circumstances, unless you cannot test for any reason.

Individuals may now take LFD tests on day 6 and day 7 of their self-isolation period. Those who receive two negative test results are no longer required to complete 10 full days of self-isolation. The first test must be taken no earlier than day 6 of the self-isolation period and tests must be taken 24 hours apart. This also applies to children under 5, with LFD testing at parental or guardian discretion.

Students should return to school on day 7, provided they:

- Have returned negative results on lateral flow tests taken on the mornings of days 6 and 7
- No longer have a high temperature
- Feel well enough to do so

Anyone who is unable to take LFD tests will need to complete the full 10 day period of self-isolation. Further information is available in the [stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed COVID-19 infection](#)

Changes to daily testing for close contacts of COVID-19

People who are fully vaccinated, or children and young people aged between 5 and 18 years and 6 months, identified as a close contact of someone with COVID-19, should take an LFD test every day for seven days and continue to attend their setting as normal, unless they have a positive test result or develop symptoms at any time.

Children under 5 are not being advised to take part in daily testing of close contacts. If a child under 5 is a contact of a confirmed case, they are not required to self-isolate and should not start daily testing. If they live in the same household as someone with COVID-19 they should limit their contact with anyone who is at higher risk of severe illness if infected with COVID-19, and arrange to take a PCR test as soon as possible.

They can continue to attend an education or childcare setting while waiting for the PCR result. If the test is positive, they should follow the [stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed COVID-19 infection](#)

Face Coverings

From today, face coverings should be worn in classrooms where pupils in year 7 and above are educated. The advice on face coverings in classrooms will be in place until Wednesday 26 January, when Plan B regulations are currently scheduled to expire, at which point it will be reviewed.

Our approach to face coverings replicates those we had in force when face coverings were previously made mandatory at all times inside as follows:

Students must wear a face covering when:

- They are inside at all times (now including in lesson time)
- moving around the premises outside between lessons and at the start/end of the day where social distancing cannot easily be maintained
- when on school or public transport.

Face coverings can be removed when:

- Students are eating or drinking in designated indoor eating areas
- Students are outside at break and/or lunch on the field/playground where social distancing can be maintained.
- Students are engaged in physical activity as part of PE lessons

All previous guidance on types of face covering and their safe hygienic storage at break/lunchtime remains the same, as does our existing guidance for those who are medically exempt from wearing a mask.

Unless exempt, all students should bring an appropriate face covering to school with them as part of their daily equipment. We are able to provide a mask to those who arrive without their face covering but a covid violation sanction will be issued for those not wearing them appropriately or misplacing them during the day.

Staff have also been advised to wear face coverings when teaching, unless they are exempt. Some staff may remove their face coverings, when socially distanced, to provide instructions or information to the class.

Existing control measures - a reminder

As way of reassurance, the following control measures will remain in place:

- Face coverings must be worn on school transport and inside in communal areas
- Ventilation of all classrooms and indoor spaces
- Enhanced cleaning
- Hand sanitiser use on entry to and exit from each room
- Separate year group zone social areas at break and lunch time
- Halted Year Group assemblies and any other 'large gatherings and mixing' inside where social distancing is difficult to maintain.
- Isolation and sending home of students who develop symptoms whilst in school
- Increased frequency (2 times a week) of home asymptomatic LFD testing
- close contacts of confirmed cases (including siblings of confirmed household cases) advised to take daily LFD tests while awaiting their PCR test results and to continue to attend school (unless they test positive or develop symptoms).

How to stop coronavirus (COVID-19) spreading – a reminder

We are keen to ensure education can continue as normal as possible after the half term break; and we wish to advocate the following things you can do to help reduce the risk of you and anyone you live with getting ill with coronavirus (COVID-19):

- get vaccinated – everyone aged 12 and over can [book COVID-19 vaccination appointments](#)
- if you're symptomatic -isolate and get a PCR test and isolate until a negative PCR result is returned (even if the LFD is negative)
- if you think you are a close contact -get a PCR test and follow close contact isolation guidance
- wash your hands with soap and water or use hand sanitiser regularly throughout the day
- cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze
- put used tissues in the bin immediately and wash your hands afterwards
- consider your social contacts – every contact carries a COVID risk, even with vaccinated people so:
 - consider whether to meet up at all
 - meet people outside and avoid crowded areas
 - open doors and windows to let in fresh air if meeting people inside
- wear a face covering if aged 11 and over when it's hard to stay away from other people – particularly indoors or in crowded places
- participate in weekly (now 2 times per week) LFD testing following national guidelines (recommended for 11 years and over). We encourage you to log your results here: <https://www.gov.uk/log-test-site-covid19-results>

We expect the coming weeks to be an unpredictable time and it is likely that we will face some disruption to the continuity of education as the Omicron wave passes. We will do all we can to minimise impact and inform you of changes with as much warning as possible, but we are likely to have to continue to make some late changes based on an ever-changing situation. Your patience and support through this tricky time is hugely appreciated, just as you have demonstrated throughout the last couple of years. It makes a huge difference in our ability to navigate the current challenges.

We will continue to monitor the situation closely, and keep you updated.

Please continue to use the absence protocol to inform the school of your children's non-attendance via attendance@corsham.wilts.sch.uk

Again, thank you for your cooperation and continued support of us and our brilliant young people.

Yours sincerely,



Rod Bell
Headteacher
The Corsham School