

3 January 2022

Dear Students, parents and carers,

We'd first like to offer you our very best wishes for 2022 and I hope you had a great Christmas break.

On 2 January the government provided schools and colleges with updated covid safety arrangements, in view of the spread of the omicron variant. Please find below some important new information and reminders for the start of the spring term. These arrangements are intended to keep students, their families, and staff as safe as possible, and to minimise disruption to learning – thank you for your support and cooperation.

### **Please take a lateral flow test before returning to college**

Students should take a lateral flow test either the night before or the morning of their first day back at college. If the lateral flow test result is positive the student should not attend college and should immediately book a confirmatory PCR test. Students should also not attend college and should book a PCR test if they have any of the 3 main symptoms of covid (high temperature; a new, continuous cough; or a loss / change to sense of taste or smell), even if a lateral flow test result is negative.

<https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>

We encourage students to continue using lateral flow tests twice weekly and students can continue to collect these from college.

In line with government guidance, we will only provide access to remote learning in cases where a student is required to self-isolate following a positive PCR test result. The responsibility for identifying close contacts continues to be with NHS Test and Trace and the government has directed schools and colleges to no longer carry out contact tracing.

### **Please wear a face covering**

From the start of the spring term, and provisionally up to 26 January, the government has asked schools and colleges to extend the student use of face coverings. When inside the college building, **including in lessons**, students are now required to wear face coverings at all times. Students should continue to use face coverings on public transport and college transport. As before Christmas, students with a medical exemption must discuss this with their progress tutor if they haven't already done so.

Students may remove face coverings when in fully outdoor areas, or when eating or drinking, but we ask that students do not remove their face coverings for longer than necessary when eating and drinking, and to be seated when eating and drinking.

### Self-isolation timeframe

If a student tests positive in a PCR test, their self-isolation period includes the day that symptoms started (or the day they had the test, if they do not have symptoms) and the next 10 full days.

Students can stop self-isolating on **day 8** if they take a lateral flow test on days 6 and 7 of self-isolation period and:

- both tests are negative
- both tests are at least 24 hours apart
- the student does not have a high temperature

If a student takes a lateral flow test on day 6 and tests positive, they should wait 24 hours before taking a further test on day 7, and then on day 8. A student must have 2 negative lateral flow results on consecutive days and not have a high temperature before self-isolation can end.

### Vaccinations and boosters

To find out more about covid vaccinations, boosters, to make a booking, or to find out about local drop-in centres, please visit:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/>

Wishing you a safe and happy 2022.

Yours sincerely,



Brendon Fletcher  
Principal