

Dear parents and carers,

As we approach the Christmas break we would like to take the opportunity to thank you again for all of your support this term, especially your support as we continue to navigate the pandemic.

Mirroring the national picture the incidence of Covid-19 cases in Middlesbrough/Redcar and Cleveland continues to rise, as well as the increase in the prevalence of the Omicron variant.

Based on the current situation we have been advised by Mark Adams the Director of Public Health that it is vital to take proactive steps to reduce the spread of infection and minimise the risk of further disruption to education when schools return in January 2022.

In Middlesbrough there have been 918 positive cases in the previous two weeks up to 11th December. Of these cases, 335 (36%) were aged 0-19 years old.

In Redcar & Cleveland there have been 1,119 positive cases in the previous two weeks up to 11th December. Of these, 393 (35%) were aged 0-19 years old.

The concern is that the increase in rates among younger people will lead to higher levels of infection among older, more vulnerable groups. We are seeing multiple cases of Covid among people living in the same household showing how easy the infection can spread to other family members.

We are writing to you to advise that our school is reviewing its Covid-19 risk assessment and from January and on advice from Public Health, it is likely that, we will be working outside of national guidance and introducing additional measures to keep our school community safe. An example of a measure that may be introduced is that all household close contacts should take a PCR test and isolate until results are known. If the PCR test is negative, students will need to take a daily lateral flow test for 7 days, only attending school if the test is negative.

As you may remember from last year, the national guidance may well change again over the holidays. I will therefore write to you at the beginning of January to let you know exactly what measures are being introduced in the academy.

Last week I wrote to you to explain that the government would like us once again to conduct on-site lateral flow tests, with students having a negative result before returning to lessons. Please see below the schedule for tests:

Year group	Test	Return to the academy
11x band	Wednesday 5 January 8.30am	Thursday 6 January
11y band	Wednesday 5 January 9.15am	Thursday 6 January
10x band	Wednesday 5 January 10.45am	Thursday 6 January
10y band	Wednesday 5 January 11.30am	Thursday 6 January
13	Wednesday 5 January 1pm	Thursday 6 January
12	Wednesday 5 January 1.45pm	Thursday 6 January
8x band	Thursday 6 January 8.30am	Friday 7 January
8y band	Thursday 6 January 9.15am	Friday 7 January
7x band	Thursday 6 January 10.45am	Friday 7 January
7y band	Thursday 6 January 11.30am	Friday 7 January
9x band	Thursday 6 January 1pm	Friday 7 January
9y band	Thursday 6 January 1.45pm	Friday 7 January

Students need to arrive 10 minutes before their test time. On arrival to the academy for their test, students need to go straight to the main dining room. Each time slot lasts 45 minutes so if you are bringing your child and are waiting for them then the maximum amount of time they should be is 45 minutes. Once students have had their tests they will leave the site.

Any student who has had COVID since 7 October should not come for a lateral flow test as guidance states that tests should not be carried out within 90 days of testing positive.

All students start the academy at the normal time on the day that they return to the academy.

From this weekend 12-15 year olds will also be able to book their Covid-19 vaccine online. Please visit www.nhs.uk/coronavirus for more information.

Working together with schools, parents have done a brilliant job in the most trying of circumstances, so we thank you again for playing your part. I hope that you all have a lovely break and from everybody at the academy we wish you a very merry Christmas and best wishes for the new year.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs R Coning
Headteacher