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Tuesday 4 January 2022

Dear Parents and Carers,

May we first begin by sincerely wishing you and your family a very happy new year. We hope you enjoyed a safe, peaceful, and relaxing Christmas. We are very much looking forward to welcoming our students back to school.

We write further to our letter of [17 December](#), to remind you of the arrangements of our phased return to school this week, which have not changed since our letter of 17 December. We also write to update you regarding the measures we are taking to mitigate against coronavirus transmission — in light of the changes to isolation requirements made by HM Government over the Christmas period, and further to the [updated operational guidance](#) provided for schools on Sunday by the Department for Education (DfE).

Whilst current COVID-19 case rates for [West Devon](#) and our neighbouring authorities of [North Devon](#) and [Torridge](#) are amongst the lowest case rates in the country, after being consistently amongst the highest for much of last term, they are higher than they were at the end of the autumn term, and are rising. This serves to emphasise the increase in the spread of the Omicron variant nationally over the last two weeks, and given the significant disruption we faced in the College last term, it also emphasises the need for us to remain vigilant to protect our students' learning and continue to enable the face-to-face education that the [Secretary of State Nadhim Zahawi](#) has made his 'absolute priority'.

For your convenience, we have summarised information into the following sections for your reference:

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Yours Sincerely,





Craig Griffiths and Rebecca Mullins  
(Associate Principals).

## Phased return to school and asymptomatic testing arrangements

On their return to school our students will take one lateral flow device (LFD) test at our asymptomatic testing site, followed by one LFD self-test at home 3-4 days later. This is to help boost participation in testing and reduce transmission after a period of social mixing during the holidays. Identifying positive cases and isolating those that are the most contagious as soon as is practical will help reduce the risk of transmission and support the continuation of face-to-face education. To facilitate this asymptomatic testing on site, and welcome everyone back to school safely whilst ensuring a return as disruption free for families and students as we can make it, we must phase the return to school for students, as outlined:

- Tuesday 4 January: All staff return for a staff development day. Students do not attend.
- Wednesday 5 January: Students in years 11, 12 and 13 will return to school for face-to-face teaching and to take their on-site LFD test. All students in years 7, 8, 9 and 10 will receive remote education.
- Thursday 6 January: Students in years 7 and 10 will return to school for face-to-face teaching and to take their on-site LFD test. All students in years 8 and 9 will receive remote education and all students in years 11, 12 and 13 will attend lessons as normal.
- Friday 7 January: All students in years 8 and 9 will return to school for face-to-face teaching and to take their on-site LFD test. All students in all other year groups will attend lessons as normal.

	Mon 03/01	Tues 04/01	Weds 05/01	Thurs 06/01	Fri 07/01
Year 7				●	
Year 8					●
Year 9					●
Year 10				●	
Year 11			●		
Year 12			●		
Year 13			●		

- 
-  Not open to students or staff.
  -  Staff training day. Students do not attend.
  -  Students do not attend and receive remote home learning.
  -  Students attend school as normal.
  - Students have COVID-19 LFD test on-site.

## Actions to be taken in response to LFD test results

Students will be 'allowed to resume face to face learning if they test negative' after their LFD test. If a student's LFD test result on-site is positive, they will be isolated in school immediately and collected by a member of their family or household to isolate at home, in line with current, updated [guidance](#). A standard lab-based Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) test must then be [arranged](#) and taken to confirm the result. (Whilst awaiting PCR results, a student should continue isolating.) If the PCR test is taken within 2 days of the positive LFD test, and is negative, it overrides the LFD test and the student can return to school, as long as the student doesn't have COVID-19 symptoms. The student is then advised to take LFD tests daily for 7 days. If the PCR test is positive, the student must isolate for the required period, i.e., for 10 days from the date of the test, or — in line with [recently updated guidance](#) from the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) — for 7 days if two LFD tests taken on day 6 and day 7 are both negative.

Students should then continue to test twice weekly at home, 3-4 days apart, as outlined in our [recent letters](#), with results reported to us via [this form](#). If any student tests positive via PCR, we would be grateful if you could report such to us so that we may assist with any contact tracing, by [completing this brief form](#).

## Remote Learning

For students in years 7-10, Teachers will provide lessons for students to undertake at home, according to phased return schedule. Lessons will be provided according to the students' scheduled timetable on these days, and teachers will post information on Class Charts marked as 'blended learning'. Lessons will be 'set' and 'due' on the same day, i.e., the day of the lesson they replace. Teachers will ensure that each Remote Learning lesson will be posted on Class Charts with a standard heading, for example:

Remote Learning | Wednesday | 05/01/2022 | Mathematics.

Teachers will provide concise advice and information to guide students through each Remote Learning lesson, and engagement will be monitored by Teachers and Subject Leads. Teachers will ensure that the following elements to support progression are evident in Remote Learning lessons:

- Explanation / modelling: Lessons will incorporate an element of direct instruction, e.g., through a recorded video. Explanations will build clearly on students' prior learning or on how students' understanding could be subsequently assessed. Explanations will be given before exercises.
- Independent activity: Activities will provide progressive, scaffolded cognitive demand, with prompts for students to consider the strategies they will use if stuck. Low stakes quizzes or tests may be used.
- Opportunity to reflect and check: Proxies for feedback will be provided such as model answers, solutions. Students will be prompted with questions / tasks to reflect on their work.

If you have any issues with the remote learning sessions, please contact your child's respective teacher in the first instance.

## Face coverings

On return to school this week, in addition to the continued requirement that all students and staff wear face coverings in corridors and communal areas, unless exempt, we are reinstating the requirement as now [recommended by the DfE](#) for all secondary schools across the country, that all students and staff wear face coverings in classrooms unless social distancing can be maintained (for example, a teacher when teaching from the front of a classroom more than 2m away from students). This is a temporary recommendation, made in light of the Omicron variant surge, and will be reviewed by 26 January, when [Plan B](#) requirements are currently scheduled to expire.

Staff will request that face coverings are worn as students enter buildings and classrooms, unless exempt. If your child is exempt, and you have already informed us, we have this on record and your child will have been provided with an exemption card and/or badge. If you have not already informed us, please do so.

We would be grateful if you could please ensure that your child has appropriate face coverings for the entirety of the school day (when inside buildings) including travel to and from school on school or public transport. Whilst we will provide face coverings for students who do not have them, to do so consistently for large numbers of students is difficult.

## Further information

Current guidance from the DfE regarding what parents and carers need to know about schools can be [viewed here](#). Current HM Government guidance on how to stay safe and help prevent the spread of coronavirus can be [viewed here](#). HM Government's COVID-19 Response: Autumn and Winter Plan 2021 (including Plan B) can be [viewed here](#). Our Coronavirus Response Risk Assessment can be [viewed here](#). Our COVID-19 Outbreak Management Plan can be [viewed here](#). An archive of all the latest letters we have sent to families can be [accessed here](#).

## Key Summary Actions to mitigate against coronavirus transmission

- Students and staff wear face coverings in communal areas, **and classrooms**, unless exempt.
- Students must adhere to the one-way system of movement within corridors.
- If travel to College is by coach or taxi, students should clean hands before boarding, wear face coverings, and should sit next to other students in their year, or siblings.
- Students and staff must wash their hands regularly (with hand sanitizer provided), when entering college, when entering a classroom, and before entering eating areas.
- Meetings will be undertaken remotely or in well-ventilated spaces with assured social distancing.
- Any visitor who does not normally work at the College will be asked to take an LFD test before visiting the College, and to prove they have done so within a 24-hour period and received a negative result. Entry to the College will not be permitted if this condition is not met.
- Educational visits will be considered on a case-by-case basis, with any event that is given the go-ahead requiring participants to take an LFD test the day before.
- All students and staff to take LFD tests at home twice a week.
  - ⇒ Please report results, whether positive or negative, to us via [this form](#).
  - ⇒ If the LFD test is positive, the person should isolate and a PCR test [arranged](#) and taken within 2 days. If the PCR test is positive, or is not taken within 2 days of the LFD test, the person must isolate. If the PCR test is taken within 2 days and is negative, the person can return to school.
- If a student or adult in the school believes they are a contact of someone who has tested positive, they should arrange and take a PCR test.
- If a student tests positive via a PCR test, we will inform possible contacts to advise them that they should arrange and take a PCR test.
  - ⇒ Parent/carers [complete this form](#) to confirm their child has tested positive via a PCR test and to identify any person with whom their child may have mixed closely. We will then contact (by email) the families of any student identified through this form as a possible contact and advise them.
  - ⇒ The student who has tested positive must isolate for 10 days (day 1 is the day after the positive LFD test, or the first day of symptoms). However, LFD tests can now be taken from day 6 of isolation, and if LFD tests taken on day 6 and 7 (at least 24 hours later) are both negative, self-isolation may end and the student can return to school (if not symptomatic) after the second negative LFD test result.
- Close contacts of suspected or confirmed Omicron cases, must isolate for 10 days regardless of their vaccination status. (We are of course unable to identify the variant through our contact tracing; any such contacts will be informed by NHS Test and Trace.)
- Any student or adult in the school who is a contact of someone who has tested positive and has taken a PCR test that returns a negative result, should take an LFD test daily for 7 days. This includes any student or adult who believes they are a contact of someone who has tested positive, or any student or adult whom we have contacted to advise that they are.
- Indoor occupied spaces will be kept well ventilated, with CO<sub>2</sub> monitors installed in classrooms to identify if ventilation needs to be improved. Students will be allowed to wear coats (not hoodies) indoors for comfort on colder days.