

4th January 2022

Dear parents/carers,

Re: changes to Covid guidance

I hope that you and your family had a good festive break and that this letter finds you well. As you will no doubt have seen, over the weekend the government announced some changes to the Covid guidance for schools. This letter aims to summarize key messages for the start of term, but a detailed guide for parents and carers can be found by navigating here: <https://bit.ly/3HvbBQP>.

Testing

The government continues to see regular testing using Lateral Flow Devices (LFDs) as an important part of reducing the risk of Covid transmission. Before the holidays, schools in England were asked to prepare to test all consenting students on their return and we have communicated to you previously about this. There are no changes to our arrangements for testing on Weds 5th January. Whilst testing remains voluntary, the government strongly encourages families to take an LFD test twice a week, for JOG on Sunday and Wednesday evenings. All test results should be reported to NHS test and trace: <https://www.gov.uk/report-covid19-result>. Only positive LFD and PCR results should be reported to the school. At present we have a good supply of LFD testing kits and will continue to distribute these through your child's tutor on a regular basis.

Face coverings

From 4th January 2022, the government is temporarily recommending that unless exempt, face coverings are worn in classrooms and teaching spaces for students in year 7 or above, in light of the Omicron variant surge. The advice is short term only, to support students and staff as they return to schools. It builds on the existing guidance that recommends face coverings in communal areas, which has been in place for JOG since the beginning of November. The guidance regarding classrooms does not include teachers, although some may choose to wear a face covering. The advice on face coverings in classrooms will be in place initially until the 26 January, when national Plan B regulations are currently scheduled to expire, at which point we are told it will be reviewed. Please ensure that your child has at least two face coverings (one as a spare) to bring to school. We do have a small supply of disposable face coverings to give out to students who may have forgotten or lost their own. For students who travel on the school buses, face coverings **must** be worn.

Self-isolation period

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 five, with LFD testing at parental or guardian discretion. If both these test results are negative, and the person does not have a high temperature, they may end their self-isolation after the second negative test result and return to school from day 8. NHS test and trace continue to be responsible for tracing and contacting all close contacts, including those in school.

For students who are self-isolating but well enough to work, we will continue to offer the best remote provision that we can in line with our remote contingency plans, which can be found on our website. Work is usually set for each class/subject via Class Charts and marked as 'Iso' or something similar. Where possible, we will use Teams to invite students to join live classes.

Vaccines

On Wednesday 22 December, the government accepted advice from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) that a primary course of vaccination should be offered to:

- children aged 5 to 11 years old who are in a clinical risk group, or who are a household contact of someone (of any age) who is immunosuppressed

In response to the threat from the Omicron variant, the JCVI advised that a Pfizer **booster** vaccine should be offered to:

- children aged 12 to 15 years old who are in a clinical risk group or who are a household contact of immunosuppressed individuals, and those who are severely immunosuppressed and have had a third primary dose
- all young people aged 16 to 17 years old

We understand that vaccines are a decision for families. For those who wish to proceed, it is our understanding that the NHS will communicate how eligible children and young people can get their boosters shortly.

Mental health and wellbeing

There are a range of online resources that the government recommends, to help you support your child with mental health and wellbeing and they include:

- [MindEd](#) - a free educational resource on children and young people's mental health
- [Every Mind Matters](#) - an online tool and email journey to support everyone in taking action to look after their mental health and wellbeing
- The [DfE blog](#) - includes [mental health resources](#) for children, parents, carers and school staff

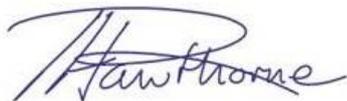
Additional advice and guidance for parents and professionals on supporting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing can be found here: <https://bit.ly/3FWbhKw>

Finally, as a polite reminder, school resumes for students at 8.45am tomorrow, Wednesday 5th January 2022. Students should arrive in full and correct uniform ready to learn. They will be in their usual lessons unless they are undergoing their LFD test.

The signs are that this may be a challenging start to the new year for all of us. At JOG, we remain focussed on ensuring that we offer the high-quality face-to-face education you should rightly expect. Clearly, if circumstances change, we will contact you as soon as possible.

I hope that this information is clear and helpful. Please do not hesitate to contact the school if you have any queries.

Yours sincerely,



Mr Richard Hawthorne
Head of School