



From the Headmaster: Weekly Update – 06/01/22

Dear Parents

I am relieved and delighted to confirm that all pupils will be back in school for the start of the Spring Term. As previously requested, we require each pupil to take a lateral flow test within 48 hours of returning to school. This applies to both junior and senior school pupils. The result of the test should be reported to the NHS and you should retain your confirmatory email of the result. Senior School pupils should bring proof of this to school on their first day back as per Mrs Graham's email of yesterday. Any pupil who tests positive or displays Covid symptoms should remain at home.

Senior school pupils will continue to test twice weekly between now and half term. We have a good supply of tests and these can be collected by pupils, as previously, from the main school reception area. It is essential that this routine, which also applies to all members of school staff, should be followed to the letter between now and half term.

Although it seems increasingly clear that the Omicron variant is less likely to inflict serious illness than its predecessors it is equally clear that it is the most infectious of those which have emerged so far. **Our greatest concern in the weeks ahead will be the potential for significant staff absence due to isolation.** For that reason, and in accordance with the most recent government guidance, we will continue to require **senior school pupils** to wear masks in class between now and half term, as well as in communal areas and corridors. Teachers will also wear masks in class, except when they are addressing the whole class from the front of the room, standing at a distance of at least two metres from pupils. Government guidance does not require **junior school pupils** to wear masks. In Year 3 and above, however, pupils will be welcome to wear masks voluntarily, at the discretion of their parents, in lessons and other indoor spaces. It is reasonable to assume that wearing a mask will reduce the possibility of contracting Covid and having to isolate at home. In addition to mask wearing, we would be grateful if parents could join us in emphasising the importance of sanitizing and handwashing.

Mr Rogers, interim Head of Junior School, and Mrs Graham have written in more detail on these and other matters in their communications with junior and senior school parents respectively. We will continue to communicate regularly with parents between now and half term. As things stand at present, we hope that sports fixtures and other co-curricular

activity will go ahead as planned but, as ever, the position may change in response to changing circumstances.

Despite the astronomic rate of infections nationally, there is now a realistic prospect of the virus playing a less dominant role in our lives later this year. On that relatively (!) optimistic note, I wish you all a Happy New Year and look forward to seeing all pupils back in school tomorrow (junior school only) and next week.

With best wishes to all

Richard Russell
Headmaster
