

Tuesday 3rd January 2022 Re: COVID-19 Update

Dear Parents/Carers,

Firstly, I would like to wish you all a very Happy New Year with the hope that 2022 brings wonderful opportunities, adventures, and blessings for our community. We look forward to welcoming the students back, on a staggered return, this week.

Updated guidance on the use of face coverings in education settings

From yesterday, Sunday 2nd January, the government has recommended that face coverings are worn in classrooms where students in Y7 and above are educated. The advice is short term only to support students and teachers as they return to school this term and builds on the existing proportionate guidance that recommends face coverings for all adults in communal areas of all settings. The advice on face coverings in classrooms will be in place until Wednesday 26th January when Plan B regulations are currently scheduled to expire, at which point it will be reviewed. **Please ensure your child brings a face mask to school.**

Students who are exempt have been issued with an exempt card and should carry it on their person at all times.

Ventilation

We will continue to ventilate all area of the Academy including classrooms. This will include opening all windows and doors. Please make sure your child wears warm clothing including their school jumper and blazer. They will need outdoor coats as they will be spending more time outside during social times.

Testing for students after the holiday period

If you have not yet done so, I would strongly urge you to complete the testing consent form which was issued electronically to you at the end of last term. In order to keep everyone in our community safe and ensure the smooth running of the Academy, it is vital that we all play our part in protecting ourselves and others. This will help boost testing participation and reduce transmission after a period of social mixing during the holidays.

Students are then strongly encouraged to continue testing twice weekly at home and to report all results to NHS Test and Trace and report any positive cases to info@astn.uk. Staff and students should take one self-test at home either the evening or morning before they return this week, then continue to test twice weekly at home.

Even if someone has tested positive for COVID-19 within the last 90 days, they are strongly encouraged to take part in LFD testing on-site or at home once they have completed their isolation period for their prior infection.

January 2022 staggered return information for parents and students:

- **Year 10/11/12/13 & 14 ONLY** will return to the Academy on Thursday 6th January 2022 at 8.40 a.m.
- **All students to attend the Academy on Friday 7th January 2022 as normal**

COVID LFD testing will be undertaken for those students with consent. If you have not already consented and wish to do so but are unable to access the electronic form, please email info@astn.uk with your child's full name, year group and Life Tutor's name.

Information on the changes to the self-isolation period for individuals who test positive for COVID-19

Since Wednesday 22nd 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.
- If both these test results are negative, and you do not have a high temperature, you may end your self-isolation after the second negative test result and return to school from day 8.

Daily testing for close contacts of COVID-19

People who are fully vaccinated, or children and young people aged between 5 and 18 years and 6 months, identified as a close contact of someone with COVID-19, should take an LFD test every day for seven days and continue to attend their setting as normal, unless they have a positive test result or develop symptoms at any time. If the test is positive, they should follow the [stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed COVID-19 infection](#).

Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) advice on COVID-19 vaccination for at-risk 5- to 11-year-olds, and booster doses for at-risk 12- to 15-year-olds and all 16 to 17 year olds

On Wednesday 22nd December, the Government, in response to the threat from the Omicron variant, 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

The Government has not yet confirmed any details/arrangements to schools for offering the 2nd dose vaccinations for students who are 12-15 years old. They have confirmed that schools should receive further information by 10th January. However, parents/carers can book 2nd dose vaccinations independently using the information and links below.

Booking vaccination appointments online:

- You can book your child's 1st dose online from the day they turn 12.
- You can usually book their 2nd dose from 24 hours after they had their 1st dose.
- You'll be offered appointment dates from 12 weeks after their 1st dose.
- [Book a COVID-19 vaccination appointment](#)

Getting the vaccine at a walk-in vaccination site:

- Your child can get a 1st dose at a walk-in COVID-19 vaccination site from the day they turn 12.
- They can get a 2nd dose if it's been 12 weeks since their 1st dose.
- [Find a walk-in COVID-19 vaccination site](#)

Finally, you will appreciate that the situation is constantly evolving, and government guidance can change at very short notice. We will do our utmost as always, to keep you up to date with all developments. Please ensure that you keep an eye out for text and email updates as well as notices on our Twitter. If you know that your contact information held by school is not current, please get in touch to update us.

Yours faithfully

Mrs J Sing



Headteacher