

3rd January 2022

Dear Parents/ Carers,

Happy new year and I hope that you and your families have been able to enjoy something of the festive break.

I am writing to you now to outline the updated Covid measures that we will be following from this January. We will continue to follow the Department of Education and public health guidance. No-one yet fully understands the extent and impact of the new variant and so we ask for your patience regarding this situation in the weeks ahead. We will do everything possible to keep the school open and operating as normally as possible but in the event that staffing challenges make this impossible, any year groups who are asked to work from home will be provided with online virtual lessons using the Google platform, as we have done previously.

Testing on return to school in January 2022

As mentioned last term, we will encourage and enable all pupils to take an LFD test during an extended tutor time on the morning they return to school, this Wednesday 5th January. However, please ensure that your children also take a test on the evening of Tuesday 4th. The result of the test should be reported in the usual way to the [NHS](#). This enables everyone to return to school at the start of term as safely as possible. Please then continue to ensure that your children test twice a week (Sunday and Wednesday evenings are recommended).

Please note: Even if your child has tested positive for Covid-19 on a PCR test within the last 90 days, the government now strongly recommends that they should carry out the LFD test (this is different to previous guidance).

Positive Covid-19 test result - important information

There are a number of actions that you need to follow if your child's home Covid-19 test is positive:

- Report the result to the NHS Test and Trace system.
- Your child should self-isolate at home.
- Contact Student Services, giving details including your child's name, tutor group, date of the test and the result (StudentServices@teignmouthschool.co.uk)
- Book a confirmatory Covid-19 PCR test at a local testing centre by phoning 119 or booking online: <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>
- Keep school informed of the PCR test result. If the confirmatory test result is positive, follow the new guidance on self-isolation detailed below. If the confirmatory PCR test result is negative, your child can return to school.
- If you have any questions or concerns about this, please contact Student Services.

Headteacher: Mr James O'Connell

Exeter Road, Teignmouth, Devon, TQ14 9HZ

Tel: 01626 774091 **Visit:** www.teignmouthsecondary.co.uk



Changes to the self-isolation period for those that test positive

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. This also applies to those returning to school.

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 your education setting from day 8.

Daily testing for close contacts of Covid-19

People who are fully vaccinated, or children and young people aged between 5 to 18 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.

Face Masks

In light of the prevalence of the new variant and its transmissibility, we will follow national guidelines and ask that face masks are worn by all inside when within two metres of others. This means that face masks should be worn in classrooms by all pupils and staff (unless they are exempt). The national advice on face coverings in classrooms will be reviewed on Wednesday 26th January, along with all of the 'Plan B' control measures.

Face coverings should also continue to be worn on all buses, trains and other public transport.

Please can you ensure that your child has at least two clean face coverings with them each day starting from this week and that you remind them of the importance of wearing a face covering during this time. We have some stocks of face coverings available for pupils who forget or lose them to ensure they are able to wear one. However, we have got through thousands of disposable masks in the last eighteen months and there are a very small minority of pupils who routinely do not bring one into school. There will be a sanction for those who forget a mask more than once a fortnight. When you discuss this with your child please remind them that we have had to implement this measure for a short period of time before and we were all able to manage this, and as a result we did limit the transmission of Covid-19 in our school. When pupils move from one block to another at the end of a period and in break and lunch times, this provides a good opportunity for them to remove their face covering and take a break from it.

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Vaccinations

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation have updated the following advice:

- A booster vaccination as a result of the omicron variant will now 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 all young people aged 16 to 17 years old.
- A second dose will hopefully be available in school before half term for all children aged between 12-15 years of age who agree and have consent, but we encourage you to take your son/daughter to a test centre to receive a second dose if you have the opportunity.
- When we receive further information about when in school vaccinations may be available, we will update you.

Exams and Assessments in January

All of the national assessments that are taking place in January will be going ahead as planned.

Once again, thank you for your continued support and we are looking forward to welcoming pupils back to school this Wednesday 5th January 2022.

Best wishes



James O'Connell
Headteacher

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