

4 January 2022

Dear all,

I hope you and your families had an enjoyable Christmas and New Year break.

2021 was a challenging year for us all; whilst the latter half of 2020 was indeed unprecedented, I think most people assumed we would be clear (or at least a little more clear) of the pandemic by this point. However, only last week the French Prime Minister, Jean Castex, described it as “a film without an ending.” I know that phrase will have resonated with many people who read it.

Precisely because it sometimes feels like a ‘film without an ending’, it is important to let our Parents/Carers know how grateful we are for your continuing support. We are stronger together and your appreciation of your child’s school (and its staff) makes a huge difference to all of us. There have been challenging times over the last 22 months, and a few more bumps on the road to come I am sure, but rest assured we will be doing our utmost to ensure your child’s education continues to be as meaningful and enjoyable as possible.

As the new term begins, we suspect that we will have to accommodate a spike in staff absence due to the latest variant. We started to see the impact of this at the end of last term, and over the Christmas break, we have asked all staff to continue to test/report any positive cases. Whilst the situation is manageable at present, there is a concern that staffing resources may be further stretched when schools start up again as normal. If this does prove to be the case, we may at some point need to utilise aspects of our remote learning package for some groups of pupils.

This does not mean that the above will happen; it means that it **may** if the situation deteriorates i.e. if we do not have enough staff in the building to teach/support all pupils. If that happens we will inform you as soon as possible, and of course we will continue to offer a remote package of learning that replicates the wider curriculum offering that would be in place at school on a day-to-day basis.

Can I also take this opportunity to reinforce the importance of testing. Students who consent to testing, should take one LFD test before they return to the academy tomorrow. This can be carried out this evening (Tuesday 4 January) or tomorrow morning (Wednesday 5 January) and should be carried out at home prior to entering the academy. Students should then continue to test twice weekly, and we will continue to ensure that testing kits are available from reception.

Students are also reminded that under the new government guidance, face masks will be worn in classrooms as well as communal areas. If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact your child's school/college.

I will finish by reiterating that, across all our schools, we are committed to staying open and providing an excellent education. If any disruption is likely to occur because of staffing issues, you will be informed in as timely a manner as possible and we will do all we can to support your child's learning.

Regards

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