



3<sup>rd</sup> January 2022

Dear Parents and Carers

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a Happy New Year.

Please find below a further update regarding the start of the new term. Apologies that there is so much information however, I wanted to provide you with all of the relevant information I have received from the Department for Education today.

In terms of the day to day operation of the school we are looking to maintain as much normality as we can. Learners have been fantastic since the return to school in September and we are committed to ensure that they continue to receive the highest quality learning and teaching and we maintain the routine of school as much as we possible.

Other than national changes, as outlined below, the only other change will be that there will be no planned after school activities between 5<sup>th</sup> January and the 7<sup>th</sup> January 2022. We will then review the timetable and share this with you for the following week.

### Update on Vaccines

We have been informed by the school immunisation service that there are plans for school health to deliver the second dose of the COVID vaccine to learners aged between 12 and 15. This will take place during the next half term.

Obviously vaccines will only be given where parents have given their consent and the consent process will start at some point in the next half term.

More detailed information regarding vaccinations will be shared with you as it becomes available. At this point I just wanted to highlight that there is planning for the second dose for eligible learners and first dose for those who have turned 12 since the last round of vaccinations.

### On site testing arrangements – Recap

There will be a phased return for all learners to school in line with the below information. This will support the on-site testing of all learners.

Tuesday 4 January	-	Staff Training day (inset) closed to learners
Wednesday 5 January	-	Year 10, Year 11 and Post 16 learners return to school
Thursday 6 January	-	Year 8 and Year 9 learners return to school
Friday 7 January	-	Year 7 learners return to school

As you are aware all learners, where we have updated consent, will undertake a lateral flow test on site on their return to school. We will notify parents as soon as possible of any positive

results. Other result may take up to 7 days to register on the NHS website so please do not be concerned if you do not receive confirmation of a negative test immediately.

All learners are encouraged to maintain twice weekly testing using Lateral Flow Tests (LFTs). We will continue to supply these via school subject to us receiving sufficient supplies. We are expecting to be able to distribute tests in the first week back but I will update you if there are any difficulties with this.

In a change to the previous guidance we have been informed that 'even if someone has tested positive for COVID-19 within the last 90 days, they are strongly encouraged to take part in LFD (Lateral Flow Device) testing on-site or at home once they have completed their isolation period for their prior infection.'

We have been asked to remind you to log any tests on the NHS Website as it provides Public Health with an accurate picture of testing across the county.

There is no need to inform the school of negative test result however, please continue to inform [head@uptonhigh.co.uk](mailto:head@uptonhigh.co.uk) of any positive test results outside of school hours and contact the main office during the school day. This helps us to effectively monitor the number of cases in the school and take action as required.

### **Face Coverings**

As you will recall face coverings were strongly recommended in all communal areas as we approached the end of last term. You will no doubt have heard in the media that from the 4<sup>th</sup> January 2022 face coverings are to be worn in all communal areas including classrooms. This measure is to reduce the transmission of the virus. This measure will be reviewed by the Government on the 26<sup>th</sup> January 2022 in line with the other Plan B measures.

To help with this we would request all learners bring an appropriate face covering to school during this period of time. We appreciate your support with this.

Learners who are exempt are not expected to wear a face covering. If your child has recently become exempt please contact the school and speak to Mrs S. Hitchen (Deputy Headteacher) or email [admin@uptonhigh.co.uk](mailto:admin@uptonhigh.co.uk) in order that we can issue your child with an exemption card.

### **Changes to the Self Isolation Period from 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2021.**

We have received the following information regarding changes to the 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. 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.'



'Anyone who is unable to take LFD tests will need to complete the full 10 day period of self-isolation. Further information is available in the stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed COVID-19 infection.'

From a school perspective this will work as follows.

Parents will continue to contact school and inform the school of a positive test result. The school will record this as currently as a 10 day period of isolation. If on day six and day seven of the isolation period the learner tests negative on a lateral flow test parents are to contact school and we will expect to see the child the following day. This will ensure that the registers are adjusted and it is clear that the learner is expected back in school.

### Daily Testing of Close Contacts

Close contacts will continue to be informed by the NHS Test and Trace service. The following guidance is being given for anyone who is a contacted by NHS Test and Trace as a close contact.

'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.

Children under 5 are not being advised to take part in daily testing of close contacts. If a child under 5 is a contact of a confirmed case, they are not required to self-isolate and should not start daily testing. If they live in the same household as someone with COVID-19 they should limit their contact with anyone who is at higher risk of severe illness if infected with COVID-19, and arrange to take a PCR test as soon as possible. They can continue to attend an education or childcare setting while waiting for the PCR result. If the test is positive, they should follow the stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed COVID-19 infection.'

As I stated at the start of this letter we will do everything we can to ensure that school remains as normal and positive an experience as possible for all our learners and I really look forward to welcoming them all back to school over the coming week.

Yours sincerely

L Cummins