

Our Ref: DWt/LPu

14th January 2022

Dear Parent/Carers,

I hope you have all had a good week and are all managing to carry on as normal as we can. As ever, a great deal of activity has taken place in school in our first full week of the New Year. Thank you as ever for all your support.

COVID-19 Update

We have had a total of 40 positive pupil cases, 3 staff cases. Thankfully all are not too unwell.

Changes to Self-Isolation

As you may be aware the government is changing the self-isolation period from Monday 17th January. The government states that positive cases should isolate for ten days however this can be reduced with two negative lateral flow tests. The period of isolation begins on the day after the onset of symptoms/the positive test result (whichever is earliest). This is considered to be the first day of isolation. **If positive cases take a lateral flow test on day 5 and then again on day 6 (with a 24 hour gap in between), and both tests come back negative, they are able to be released from self-isolation providing they no longer have a temperature. Our understanding is that the first day for return to school would be day 7, although we are still awaiting confirmation of this from the Department of Education.**

Again there have been some changes that are due to begin on Monday. If anyone has any of the main symptoms, they are strongly advised to take a PCR test, not a LFT. If someone with symptoms has already taken a LFT for any reason and the result is positive, they do not need to take a follow-up PCR test.

Information on the vaccination programme for 12 to 15 year olds

Further to my reminder last week young people aged 12 to 15 in England are now being offered a second dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine at a minimum of 12 weeks from the first dose, following advice from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI). You can book vaccinations for those aged 12 or over, through the [NHS Booking System](#). We will still be hosting the vaccinations here, as all secondary schools are, but still haven't as yet been given a date.

Year 11 matters

Looking ahead to the summer "The government has confirmed its commitment to exams going ahead this summer. Taking mocks will help students to prepare for those exams and schools understandably want their students to take mocks if they can," Ofqual said.

New data out this week showed Year 11 youngsters missed the most amount of school during the autumn term. An average of 11.5 per cent of sessions (half a day of schooling) were missed by Year 11 across the country last term, the highest absence rate among secondary year groups, according to an FFT Education Datalab analysis of attendance data from a representative sample of 2,400 secondary schools.

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The data was revealed after education secretary Nadhim Zahawi told the BBC's Sunday Morning show that he was determined exams should take place - both this term and in the summer.

"My absolute commitment is that exams are going ahead both this January and for the summer, for GCSEs and A levels," he said, although he added that the government understands Omicron was already causing disruption to this and needed to be taken into account. We're putting in mitigations to make sure that we recognise [those students] who have had their education disruption."

We know that we are not in a unique position with regards to absence and we are working hard to do all we can to ensure all of our Year 11 attend regularly, indeed all year groups, and are supporting them to give the very best chance of success come summer, as we just do not know what the situation will look like.

Our Year 11 just need to listen, try their best and never give up. They and the rest of the school have heard me say this on many occasions but it really will make a positive difference. We have a great deal on offer here at Woodlands and I am in no doubt that all will make the most of the support they are given.

Mrs Boydell – Head of Modern Foreign Languages (MFL)

Bonjour, Guten Tag, Hola from the MFL faculty. My name is Mrs Boydell and I am Head of Faculty. We teach French, German and Spanish here at Woodlands and I have been fortunate to have been teaching these at Woodlands for the last 4 years and for 22 years before that in other schools in the area. I have always loved learning languages and I am currently learning Portuguese and brushing up on my Italian.

In the languages faculty we passionately believe that learning another language not only gives you great communication skills that are sought after by employers in many different sectors, but also improves your English skills and opens your eyes to other cultures. Through languages you can explore a world of possibilities and far away countries. We aim to instil in pupils a love for language and be inspired to travel and take up opportunities in other countries. A big part of learning a language is to be able to speak to others and experience the culture first hand. We have always run many trips abroad and we hope to be able to continue this soon - circumstances permitting!

Moving forward

We will keep you updated with any other changes with regards to COVID as and when they arrive. There are weekly changes at present and more often than not we do get conflicting advice that we have to decipher. Despite the ever changing landscape, we continue to work hard to ensure all are safe, happy, looked after and thriving in all aspects of school life.

Best wishes,



Mr David Wright
Head Teacher