



Whitburn Church of England Academy

An Academy with Specialist Status in Maths and Computing

Whitburn, Sunderland, SR6 7EF Principal: J E Crowe B.A. (Hons)
Telephone: 0191 529 3712 Facsimile 0191 529 5569 E-mail: office@whitburncofeacademy.org

'Excellence for All'

22nd July 2021

End of Summer Term Update and Arrangements for September

Dear Parent/Carer

It does not seem that long ago when I was writing to you at the end of the last summer term in 2020 and sadly, in the summer of 2021, the Pandemic continues to dominate our lives at home and school. Over the course of this academic year, the resilience shown by our students and staff has meant that high quality learning could continue to take place whether at home or in school.

The volunteers comprising of ex-students, parents and governors, working alongside our own support staff ensured that all students were able to be tested three times in March and school could reopen once again. I am eternally grateful for the time and care shown by this team in order to keep our school community safe.

Attendance this week continues to be around the 50% mark, due to the amount of our students self-isolating because of the increase in the numbers of localised cases in South Tyneside. Staff now find themselves either broadcasting lessons live to those who are isolating, or utilising TEAMS to ensure continuity of learning whilst delivering the lessons to the students that they have in front of them in the classroom. Remote learning continues to adapt to the circumstances around us, in an effort to ensure that nobody misses out on their learning.

Arrangements for September

The schools 'COVID-19 operational guidance from 19th July', recently issued by the DFE, marks a new phase in the government's response to the pandemic. As COVID-19 becomes a virus that we have to learn to live with, there is now an imperative to reduce the disruption to children and young people's education - particularly given that the direct clinical risks to children are extremely low, and every adult will have been offered a first vaccine and the opportunity for 2 doses by mid-September.

As I mentioned to you last week, with the current rise in localised cases we will always follow the advice of the local Public Health board as and when necessary. From September, unless any further guidance is issued over the summer holidays, we will be making the following changes in how the school will be operating.

PTO

Document available in large font, alternative language or audio format on request



Whitburn Church of England Academy is a company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales (Company Number 07465520)
Registered Office: Whitburn Church of England Academy, Whitburn, Sunderland, SR6 7EF

Mixing and Bubbles

Our current “bubble” system of year groups being kept in separate parts of the school building will end. Year groups will be allowed to mix together throughout the school building and whole school assemblies will be able to take place. This will also mean that more than one year group can access the dining room over the lunchtime period. Students will not have to remain in classrooms for half of their lunchtime and will be allowed to go outside for fresh air and social time and then go into the Dining Hall. We are continuing to operate our designated year group outdoor social spaces, as these have proven to be popular with students and additionally help with managing the whole lunchtime operation for 1,200 students. This will also help us to switch back to the bubble system more easily should we be required to.

Face Coverings

Face coverings are no longer advised for students, staff and visitors either in classrooms or in communal areas. From September, students and staff can continue to wear face coverings should they wish to do so, however this is not mandatory.

At present, the government has removed the requirement to wear face coverings in law but expects and recommends that they are worn in enclosed and crowded spaces, such as public transport and dedicated transport to school or college. This guidance may change before we return to school in September and we will update you accordingly.

Please be aware that if we have an outbreak in our school, the Director of Public Health might advise us that face coverings should temporarily be worn in communal areas or classrooms (by students, staff and visitors, unless exempt).

Continuing Good Hygiene

Frequent and thorough hand cleaning should now be regular practice. We will continue to ensure that students clean their hands regularly. Hand sanitiser will still be available in all classrooms and staff will actively encourage students to use this on a regular basis.

The ‘catch it, bin it, kill it’ approach continues to be very important and this message will continued to be reinforced around the school site. Classrooms will also continue to be well ventilated and cleaned throughout the school day.

Tracing Close Contacts and Isolation

As from Saturday 24th July, any close contacts of positive cases will now be identified via NHS Test and Trace and education settings will no longer be expected to undertake contact tracing. The new systems in place regarding this are outlined in detail in the letter from South Tyneside Council attached with this correspondence.

As a reminder, from 16th August 2021, children under the age of 18 years old will no longer be required to self-isolate if they are contacted by NHS Test and Trace as a close contact of a positive COVID-19 case. Instead, children/parents will be contacted by NHS Test and Trace, informed they have been in close contact with a positive case and advised to take a PCR test. We would encourage all individuals to take a PCR test if advised to do so.

18 year-olds will be treated in the same way as children until 4 months after their 18th birthday, to allow them the opportunity to get fully vaccinated. At this point they will then be subject to the same rules as adults and so, if they choose not to get fully vaccinated, they will need to self-isolate if identified as a close contact.

Students, staff and other adults should follow public health advice on self-isolation. They should not come into school if they have symptoms, have had a positive test result or other reasons requiring them to stay at home due to the risk of them passing on COVID-19 (for example, if they are required to quarantine).

If anyone in our school does develop COVID-19 symptoms, however mild, we will continue to send them home and instruct them to follow public health advice.

Summer and Autumn Testing Arrangements

Asymptomatic Testing over the holidays

The twice-weekly asymptomatic LFD testing programme will be paused for students over the summer holidays, unless they are attending settings that remain open, such as summer schools and out of school activities based in school settings. In this instance, your child can continue to do so by ordering LFD test kits from GOV.UK or by collecting kits from your local pharmacy.

Symptomatic Testing over the holidays

If your child develops symptoms at any time over the holidays (including a high temperature; a new, continuous cough; or a loss or change to their sense of smell or taste and in addition sore throat or headaches) they must immediately self-isolate, and book a test by visiting <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>.

On-Site Testing in September

We have been directed to offer your child two tests on site at the start of term before continuing regular testing at home. The DFE is allowing schools to stagger the return of all students across the first week of the autumn term in order to minimise disruption within the school for those wishing to opt for this testing provision.

If you wish to take up this offer and have read the attached privacy notice, please complete the linked [form](#) to indicate that:

- Your child will be available for testing on their Year group allocated dates
- You give consent for your child to take part in testing.
- **Or**, your child will be unable to take part in testing due to them having COVID within 90 days of 4th September. This would mean that they have had a positive result from a PCR test on or after 5th June 2021.

For those consenting, this form must be completed by Friday 30th July, as this will allow us to plan staffing ratios. Once we have received your completed form we will email a specific timeslot for your child to attend to be tested on their allocated Year group date and within the time period indicated in the table below. You should receive this email week commencing 23rd August. **If you do not complete the form, we will assume non-consent for your child.**

The on-site testing process will be carried out by students themselves, with guidance and support from trained staff. The lateral flow tests are quick and easy to undertake, using a swab of the nose and throat. Please be assured that if, on the day of the test, your child does not willingly agree to complete the test, that they will not be made to do so and you will be informed.

Return to School

As a result of the testing requirements, students will return to school in September as follows:

Saturday 4th September	Student LFD Test 1 <i>Between 8am-6pm</i>	Years 12 & 13	8am - 11am
		Year 7	11am - 2pm
		Year 11	2pm - 5pm
Sunday 5th September	Student LFD Test 1 <i>Between 8am-6pm</i>	Year 10	8am - 11am
		Year 9	11am - 2pm
		Year 8	2pm - 5pm
Monday 6th September	Staff INSET		
Tuesday 7th September	Staff INSET		
Wednesday 8th September	Student LFD Test 2 <i>Between 8am-6pm</i>	Years 12 & 13	8am - 11am
		Year 7	11am - 2pm
		Year 11	2pm - 5pm
Thursday 9th September	Student LFD Test 2 <i>Between 8am-6pm</i>	Year 10	8am - 11am
		Year 9	11am - 2pm
		Year 8	2pm - 5pm
Friday 10th September	Years 7 and 12	Attend school from 08.45am <i>all equipment and PE kit needed</i>	
	Years 8, 9, 10, 11 and 13	Attend school from 11.15am <i>all equipment and PE kit needed</i>	

By starting the testing at the weekend prior to the start of term and undertaking this on a staggered basis, will minimise further disturbance or disruption to learning and allow us to make a positive start to the new term.

Please note that the scholars' bus service will be running as normal from Friday 10th September and information about school lunches and dining hall rotas will be communicated throughout the summer break.

I apologise about the lengthy communication, however as we step cautiously towards what we consider and hope to be the "normal" running of our school, I have to ensure that all parents/carers are fully aware of the new guidelines that all schools have to adhere to.

I am incredibly lucky to have a community of parents/carers who have continued to support the school throughout this pandemic and help enforce important messages about masks, hygiene and the need to engage positively with remote learning throughout this pandemic. This has been an especially difficult half term due to extremely high levels of staff and student absence and I must applaud all of our staff, students and parent/carers for how they have responded to this situation, to ensure that the school has remained open and education has continued.

Finally, I wish you all a restful and peaceful summer break and I am looking forward to a positive start to the new term in September. Please take care and I will write again during the summer break with any further updates as and when required.

Yours faithfully



J E Crowe
Principal