



Whitburn Church of England Academy

An Academy with Specialist Status in Maths and Computing

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'Excellence for All'

2nd December 2021

Covid-19 Update and January 2022 Testing Consent Form

Dear Parent/Carer

As you are aware, the Prime Minister announced on 27th November 2021 the temporary introduction of new measures as a result of the Omicron Covid-19 variant. These measures are precautionary whilst the government tracks and assesses the new variant.

Schools also received some updated operational guidance from the Department for Education, which reflects many of the additional measures already in place in South Tyneside schools. These measures will be in place for the next 3 weeks, and are outlined below:

Face Coverings

Face coverings should continue to be worn indoors by students for the remainder of this term, including in lessons, unless they are exempt. They must also be worn on school buses and public transport, as well as in local shops.

We appreciate your continued co-operation with this and request that you ensure your child comes to school each day with a suitable face covering. If your child is unable to wear a face covering for medical reasons, please let us know via office@whitburncofeacademy.org - if your child has an exemption lanyard then they should wear this whilst on the school site.

Contract Tracing and Isolation

The current guidance remains and students who are close contacts of those testing positive do NOT need to self-isolate, but will be advised to take a PCR test. We continue to encourage all individuals to take a PCR test if advised to do so.

However, all individuals who have been identified as a *close contact of a suspected or confirmed case of the Omicron variant* of Covid-19, *irrespective of vaccination status or age*, will be contacted directly by NHS Test and Trace and informed of this. They will then be required to self-isolate immediately for 10 days and asked to book a PCR test.

Vaccinations

The advice from the NHS is that vaccines are the best defence against Covid-19. The immunisation team have already visited the school so, if your child is aged 12 or over and you now wish for them

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



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to be vaccinated, then you can book a vaccination using the NHS [website](#). Those aged 16 years or over will be offered appointments for a 2nd dose, from 12 weeks after the 1st dose.

Testing

Please can you continue to encourage your child to complete twice-weekly LFD testing at home? In the event of a positive LFD test, it is important that your child does **not** come into school and that you book a confirmatory PCR test as soon as possible. Whilst awaiting a confirmatory PCR result, your child should continue to self-isolate.

We will be issuing another LFD home test kit to your child over the coming weeks, as the government have asked us to ensure they have sufficient at home to cover the school holiday period and the first week back in January.

If your child develops Covid-19 symptoms

Your child should **not** come into school if they have any Covid-19 symptoms. If anyone in school develops Covid-19 symptoms, however mild, we will arrange for them to be collected by a member of their family or household and ask they follow public health current advice.

Visitors to the School site

We ask that parent/carers only come on site if arranged, and that a face covering is worn unless exempt.

Student Wellbeing and Support

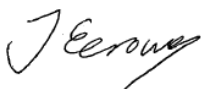
If your child is experiencing any emotional difficulties in response to the pandemic, such as anxiety, stress or low mood, we ask that you notify your child's Head of Learning or Inclusion Support Assistant as soon as possible, so appropriate support can be put in place.

January On-site Testing Arrangements

The government have asked all secondary schools to prepare to test all consenting students **once** on the school premises on return in the first week in January. This is to be followed by one LFD self-test at home 3-4 days after. After this, students should continue twice-weekly testing at home in line with government guidelines. **Please complete the [linked consent form for January 2022 testing](#) by Wednesday 8th December.** Testing is voluntary, but students are strongly encouraged to participate. We will update parent/carers on the January testing arrangements prior to the end of term, once we have established the numbers of consenting students involved.

Once again, I would like to extend my sincere thanks to you all for your continued support. Please be assured that we continue to take a sensible and cautious approach, and are committed to working closely with our local Public Health team. We hope that the additional measures implemented do not need to be extended beyond the remainder of this term; however, we will write to you before the term starts in January to confirm this.

Yours faithfully



J E Crowe
Principal