



Monday 29 November 2021

Face coverings

Dear Parents/Carers

In light of the new guidance for all education and childcare settings on new measures in response to the identification of the Omicron variant of COVID-19, we are asking all staff and all students in Years 7 to 13 to wear a face covering when in school. Staff and students who are exempt will not be asked to wear a face covering. This will remain in place for the remaining 3 weeks of term. The new measures are being introduced as a precaution to slow down the spread of the new variant while more information is gathered.

Students will not have to wear a face mask when in the classroom in line with government guidance, but can if they choose to do so. Students will be able to remove their face coverings when seated in the halls to allow them to eat and drink. Given evidence suggest that the risk of spread of Covid-19 is low when outdoors, students will be permitted to remove their masks at break and lunchtime and when moving between lessons once they have left the building.

Students in Years 7 to 13 should also continue to wear face coverings on public and dedicated school transport, unless they are exempt.

Testing

Testing remains important in reducing the risk of transmission of infection within schools. Please ensure that your child continues to test twice a week using a Lateral Flow Test. We will continue to send home testing kits. Tests are also available to order for free on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) or at your local pharmacy.

Contact tracing and isolation

The current guidance on contact tracing and isolation remains in place. Students who test positive will be subject to the normal test and trace process, which will identify close contacts. This is likely to be a small number of individuals who would be most at risk of contracting COVID-19 due to the nature of the close contact.

Children under 18 years old, and those who are double vaccinated, are not required to self-isolate if they are identified as a close contact. At this point, close contacts of a positive case will be informed by NHS Test and Trace and advised to take a PCR test. Self-isolation will continue for those who have tested positive for COVID-19. Any suspected or confirmed close contacts of the Omicron variant will be asked to isolate for 10 days.

Vaccination

All eligible students aged 12 and over are encouraged to take up the offer of the vaccine, including boosters. The NHS guidance states the following:

- Vaccines are our best defence against COVID-19;
- They help protect young people and adults, and benefit those around them; and
- Vaccination makes people less likely to catch the virus and less likely to pass it on.

To book a vaccine, please visit: [Book or manage a coronavirus \(COVID-19\) vaccination - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk).

Staying safe

We are remaining vigilant as a school in the run up to Christmas to ensure the safety of our students, their families and our staff. Crucially, we will continue our drive on ensuring good hygiene for everyone with students being reminded about the importance of regular hand washing and use of hand sanitiser. We are continuing to ensure all teaching rooms and spaces remain well ventilated and that we maintain our current cleaning regimes to ensure that contact areas are regularly sanitised. As currently, we will continue to follow the public health advice and if necessary, in response to the latest epidemiological data, be prepared to step measures up or down in future depending on our local circumstances.

We will review our measures over the coming weeks and will advise of any restrictions that will be in place for students returning in January. We will also write to you in due course with our arrangements for testing students on our return on Tuesday 4 January.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you wish to discuss this further on parent@tdms.worcs.sch.uk or via the school number.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark red ink, appearing to be 'Ruth Allen', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Ruth Allen
Headteacher