



Highfield Middle School

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Headteacher: Richard Oades

15th December 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

- **New Close Contact Testing requirements**
- **Covid-19 testing for Y7 and Y8 on return to school in January**
- **Vaccination update for pupils aged 12 – 15 years**

Yesterday the DfE issued new guidance on Lateral Flow testing for close contacts of Covid-19 cases. This is in response to the new Omicron variant and a rise in Covid-19 cases. I have summarised the key points and the implications for us at Highfield for your information below:

- Anyone who has tested positive for Covid-19 should isolate for 10 days (as we already know).
- Anyone who has symptoms of Covid-19 should get a PCR test and isolate until the result of their PCR test. If this is negative, they can end isolation (as we already know).
- Pupils (aged 5+) and vaccinated staff who are identified as a close contact of a positive case of Covid-19 (any variant) do not need to isolate and can still come to school if they don't have symptoms. They will be required to take a **daily Lateral Flow Test for 7 days** and report the result online at www.gov.uk/report-covid19-result. They will also be required to take a (more accurate) PCR test (book online at www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test). They will need to continue with Lateral Flow tests for 7 days, even if the PCR test result is negative.
- Positive Lateral Flow results and ALL PCR results should be reported to school as soon as possible via admin@highfield.northumberland.sch.uk, including in school holidays.
- The new guidance does not yet clarify whether individuals who have had Covid-19 in the last 90 days should follow the directions above. We are led to believe that those who have recently recovered from Covid-19 should undertake 7 days of LFD testing as described.
- NHS Track and Trace are now responsible for close contact tracing in schools. However, where we feel there has been obvious close contact in school, we may get in touch with parents/carers in advance of Track and Trace and advise you to follow the testing guidance above.
- All staff and pupils in Y7 and Y8 should continue to take a Lateral Flow test twice each week, unless they are following the guidance above. If your child has needs which makes testing difficult, please get in touch with us to discuss.
- We will send Y7 and Y8 pupils home with Lateral flow tests for the Christmas break this week.

Once again, we will be testing all pupils in Year 7 and 8 when they return to school after Christmas.

On the teacher training day (Tuesday 4th January) we will invite Year 7 and 8 pupils into school for testing only. All pupils will then start school on Wednesday 5th January. Please see the table overleaf for testing appointment times on Tuesday 4th January.

Class	Surname	Time	Class	Surname	Time
7EA	A - M	09:45	8TH	A - M	12:45
	N - Z	10:00		N - Z	13:00
7JLX	A - M	10:15	8DB	A - M	13:15
	N - Z	10:30		N - Z	13:30
7RM	A - M	11:00	8JB	A - M	14:00
	N - Z	11:15		N - Z	14:15
7FH	A - M	11:30	8CCU	A - M	14:30
	N - Z	11:45		N - Z	14:45

January return to school testing will take place in the Room A5 – The Annexe Science Lab. Pupils should enter via the main Annexe entrance, and leave via the Annexe rear doors. Please arrive during your designated time slot.

We have also been advised that 12 – 15 year old pupils will be able to get a second vaccination dose, at least 12 weeks after their first dose. The vaccination team first visited Highfield on 8th October, 12 weeks from then will be Friday 31st December. We expect another visit from the vaccination team in the new year, but as yet don't know when that will be. If your child becomes eligible for a 1st or 2nd vaccine and you don't want to wait for the vaccination team to return to school, you can book this online via the [national booking system](#).

Information on vaccination for 12 to 15 year olds can be found in the [COVID-19 vaccine for children aged 12 to 15 guidance](#). Further information on the coronavirus booster vaccination and booking a vaccination can be found on [NHS.UK](#).

We really hope that everyone stays well and can enjoy a safe and happy Christmas with their loved ones. It is, once again, very important for us all to follow the rules to stop the spread of Covid-19. Hand washing is still important, and we have dozens of sanitizing stations around the school. Year 7 and 8 pupils must continue to wear face covering in school and we also recommend them for our younger pupils too.

As always, if you have any questions or concerns, or if you need support in any way, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Regards



Richard Oades
Headteacher