

Saint Bede's Catholic High School

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Dear Parents/Carers

I am now able to confirm the arrangements for the on-site lateral flow testing at the start of the new term. In addition, I would like to reiterate some of our key expectations regarding uniform and appearance, as well as updating you on other COVID-19 developments.

Return to school arrangements

As I set out in my update last week, the start of term in January will again be staggered as set below to facilitate the on-site lateral flow device (LFD) testing.

Year	Testing	Return to school
7	Wed 5/1: 8.30am - 10am	Thurs 6/1: 8.55am
8	Wed 5/1: 10am – 11.30am	Thurs 6/1: 8.55am
9	Wed 5/1: 12.30pm - 2pm	Thurs 6/1: 8.55am
10	Wed 5/1: 2pm – 3.30pm	Thurs 6/1: 8.55am
11	Tues 4/1: 1pm - 3pm	Wed 5/1: 8.55am

As previously, on-site testing is optional and will only be offered to those pupils whose parents/carers have provided their consent. You will receive separate communication from school regarding this consent.

If you have given your consent for your child to have an on-site LFD, they should arrive at school during the relevant time window for their year group. Siblings in different year groups are welcome to attend together on Wednesday. Pupils should enter the site via the usual side gate pupil entrance and make their way to the School Hall where they will be met by staff. Pupils will leave the site via the opposite side gate adjacent to the Chapel.

Please note that if your child has tested positive for COVID-19 **within 12 weeks of the test date**, they should not attend the on-site testing, as this may produce a 'false positive' result.

Uniform and Appearance standards

Looking ahead to the new term, please remind your child of our expectations regarding uniform and appearance. In particular:

- 'Hoodies' and designer/sports jumpers are not appropriate for school and should not be seen on site.
- No jewellery is acceptable other than a single small stud in the lobe of each ear, a watch and a chain and cross. Plastic 'retainers' are not acceptable as an alternative to an item of jewellery that is not permitted, such as a nose stud or ring.
- Make up, nail varnish and false/acrylic nails are not acceptable.
- Long hair should be tied back.
- The school skirt should be worn in a professional manner appropriate for a school and working environment. This means just above the knee with the waistband visible and not rolled up.

I am particularly concerned about the failure of a significant number of pupils to wear the school skirt in a professional manner as set out above. This is a view which, I know, is shared by many parents and carers. I have made clear to pupils in assemblies this week that unless urgent improvement is seen in this respect we will explore the introduction of an alternative skirt to address the problem.

Daily testing for contacts of COVID-19

From Tuesday 14th December, a new national approach has been introduced for 'contacts' of a person who tests positive for COVID-19. All adults who are fully vaccinated, and children aged 5 years to 18 years and 6 months, who are identified as a 'contact' of someone who tests positive for COVID-19 (whether the Omicron variant or not) should take an LFD test every day for 7 days instead of self-isolating.

If anyone in your household tests positive for COVID-19, or your child is identified by NHS Test & Trace as a 'contact', they should take an LFD each day for 7 days and report the result via the government online reporting service. If your child tests positive, they should immediately self-isolate and book a PCR test to confirm the result. If the PCR is positive, they must self-isolate for 10 days. If the PCR is negative, they no longer need to self-isolate but should continue to carry out the daily tests for the remaining days.

If your child is taking part in the twice-weekly testing programme, they have been issued with sufficient kits to test twice-weekly over the Christmas holidays. If you require additional kits to carry out the 7-day daily testing, these are available through the usual routes such as local pharmacies and online.

COVID-19 vaccinations update

I have been asked by the Department for Education to remind you that parents/carers of children aged 12-15 who have not yet had their first vaccine can book their child's vaccination slot over the Christmas holidays via the national booking system. In some cases, parents/carers will be able to get their booster at the same time as their child getting their first vaccine.

Thank you for your support.

Yours faithfully

Mr P Marsden
Headteacher