



15 December 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

Ahead of the end of term, I wanted to take this opportunity to thank you all for everything you have been doing to support your children this term. I know that it is difficult for us all at the moment but I greatly appreciate you working with us to support your child.

Can I remind you that **the last day of term is Thursday 16 December**, which is a non-uniform/Christmas jumper day. We are asking our students bring in a food donation to contribute to The Bay Food Bank.

It has been another long and difficult year. As we approach the Christmas holidays it is important that the children do get a break from school work. We will all need some time to switch off and physically and mentally recuperate. I would like to wish you and your family the very best for the Christmas holidays.

Arrangements for January 2022

The government have stated that all secondary schools should carry out on-site Covid-19 testing of all students prior to them returning to lessons in January.

As you are aware to test and process the results for over 1200 students is a logistical challenge involving a lot of staffing and I am sorry to say this will mean a staggered start to the new term. We will need to stagger the return of students over the first two days of term to ensure this is carried out in a safe, well-planned and effective manner, ensuring the health and safety of all students and staff. **We are trying to get all of the students back in as quickly as we can and we appreciate your understanding around this.**

In order to manage this phased return, **students will therefore need to come into school for their first lateral flow test the day before they return to school for lessons. They will only attend that day for their LFD test. Students will return to school on the following dates. Please see my letter sent on 10 December for further details – it is on our website too.**

	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12	Year 13
Tuesday 4 Jan	Remote Learning LFD Test 10.00 – 11.30	Remote Learning	Remote Learning	Remote Learning	Remote Learning LFD Test 1.30 – 3.00	Remote Learning LFD Test 12.00 – 1.00	Remote Learning LFD Test 12.00 – 1.00
Weds 5 Jan		Remote Learning LFD Test 9.00 – 10.45	Remote Learning LFD Test 11.00 – 12.45	Remote Learning LFD Test 1.30 – 3.00			

The full timetable will then begin on Thursday 6 January.

Remote learning

Remote learning will begin from 11.00am on Tuesday 4 January. Please encourage your child to engage with this for the day or two they are not in school. Below are some reminders:

- All work will be set via Microsoft Teams in advance of timetabled lessons. Work should include a narrated PowerPoint for students to work through.
- Students will be expected to work to their school timetable as far as is possible. Break will be 10.40 - 10.55 and lunch will be 11.45 - 12.25.
- Students should check their e-mail and Teams regularly.
- Lessons will begin at 8.55am as normal and all resources will be shared on Teams. During their timetabled lesson times, teachers will lead the lesson via the Teams Chat function wherever possible so students should log into Teams and join the lesson they have on their timetable. Where teachers are unable to lead the lesson 'live' they will still provide work, usually including a narrated PowerPoint, for students to work through.
- Form tutors will lead tutor sessions.
- If students are unable to follow their timetable at the designated times for any reason, for example due to shared IT, they will still be able to access the work in Teams and should aim to complete some work for every lesson they would have had that day.
- Students should share their work with their teachers electronically where possible. Not all work will be marked, just as it would not if they were in school, however teachers will respond to work submitted.
- If your child is unable to complete work electronically, please let us know.

Testing over the holidays

All staff and students should test over the holidays in line with national guidance. This means that they should test if they will be in a high-risk situation that day and before visiting people who are at higher risk of severe illness if they get COVID-19. Test kits are being sent home with students before the end of term. If your child is absent or does not come with a pack of LFD tests there are spare sets in school and the school office will be open on Friday 17 December for parents to come in to collect a pack.

Daily testing for contacts of COVID-19

From Tuesday 14 December, a new national approach to daily testing for contacts of COVID-19 is being introduced. All adults who are fully vaccinated and children aged 5 to 18 years and 6 months, identified as a contact of someone with COVID-19 – whether Omicron or not – should take a lateral flow device (LFD) test every day for 7 days instead of self-isolating. Daily testing by close contacts will help to slow the spread of COVID-19. Daily testing for contacts of COVID-19 will help protect education settings by reducing transmission and will also help keep pupils in face-to-face education.

Exams

The DFE have said that external exams will of course go ahead in January. They have said: "There are exams for vocational and technical qualifications timetabled for January. Students who are due to sit these exams will be prepared and it is right that they should be given every opportunity to demonstrate what they have learnt. Exams and formal assessments will go ahead. Consequently, it is essential that students continue to prepare for these assessments".

Uniform and dress code reminder

As the end of this year approaches, I would like to take this opportunity to remind you of our uniform and dress code requirements in advance of the holidays when some of you may be buying new uniform for your child. Please see the guidance on our website. As we approach the end of term I would like to thank parents and students who have supported our uniform expectations again this year.

Winter Weather

At the time of writing, this winter has not yet been too harsh, however I thought I would take the opportunity to explain our policy in the light of adverse weather. It is our policy to keep the school open wherever possible. The Department for Education recognises the delivery of education as an essential service, as do we. If we do have to close, parents/carers will be informed through ParentMail, the school website www.gshs.org.uk or the North Tyneside Council website www.northynteside.gov.uk . Please continue to assume the school is open unless you hear otherwise.

Finally, I would like to thank you again for your continued support of the school and wish you a Merry Christmas.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ian D. Wilkinson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a clear first name and a last name.

Mr Wilkinson

Headteacher