

7th July 2021



**Stokesley School
& Sixth Form College**

Being the best we can be

Headteacher: Mrs H L Millett

Dear parents / carers

Following the announcement yesterday about covid guidance changing in education settings from step 4 of the government's road map, I thought it would be useful for me to write to you to summarise the changes and give you an early indication of how the school might respond to the key requirement of testing all students at the start of next term. The summary of the new guidance is as follows:

1. there will be no more bubbles or pods from the start of the autumn term;
2. schools should have 'Outbreak Management Plans' that includes strategies for scenarios like going back into bubbles, re-introducing online learning, re-introducing face coverings etc in response to local issues;
3. schools will no longer have to complete contact tracing from 19th July because this will pass over to NHS Test and Trace;
4. from 16th August, children under 18 will no longer be required to isolate if they are contacted by test and trace, but will be advised to take a PCR test instead;
5. face coverings will no longer be advised for students, staff and visitors from 19th July;
6. control measures in September will focus on good hygiene for everyone, appropriate cleaning regimes, keeping occupied spaces well ventilated, and following public health advice on testing, isolating and managing confirmed cases;
7. schools will need to set up an Asymptomatic Testing Site at the start of the autumn term and offer all students two tests 3-5 days apart - schools can stagger students' return across the first week to facilitate this;
8. positive cases will still isolate as they do now.

We welcome the end of bubbles, or pods as we have called them, as - although necessary - they have made our teachers' job much more difficult and have restricted the breadth and depth of our curriculum. I, and my senior team, also welcome an end to contact tracing being carried out by school staff: it is a relief to see an end to the lost hours spent doing this when we should be educating your children. Finally, we are delighted that there will be an end to large groups of students needing to self-isolate which is highly disruptive to their education and can have a negative impact on their mental health.

In terms of the testing site that we are now required to set up at the start of the year, we have not had the opportunity to finalise our plans yet. We will write to you before the end of term confirming exactly what this means for you, but it is likely to mean a slight change to students' return dates. As was the case when we had to test all students back in March, we will ensure we devise a plan that results in the least disruption to learning possible.

I hope you found this update helpful; please get in touch if you have any questions or concerns.

Yours faithfully

Mrs H. L. Millett
Headteacher

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