



4th January 2022

Dear Parents / Carers,

Happy New Year! All of the staff at Stokesley School and Sixth Form College hope that you had a restful Christmas break.

You will already be aware from the national press that some announcements have been made about the expectations for students' return to school this week; this letter gives an overview of the information that has been shared, focusing on what is most relevant to you.

Quick Read

1. Students will need to wear face coverings in all internal spaces within school when they return, including classrooms, and this will be in place until at least 26 January.
2. Schools should continue with plans to test students for Covid-19 on site as soon as they return to school.
3. The 10-day isolation period for those testing positive for Covid-19 has been reduced to 7 days, as long as individuals test negative on day 6 and 7 with the two tests taken a minimum of 24 hours apart.
4. Fully vaccinated people and those under the age of 18 years 6 months should take daily lateral flow tests for 7 days if they are identified as a close contact of a positive Covid-19 case. If they test positive, they should isolate immediately and take a confirmatory PCR test.
5. The government is issuing 7000 air purifiers to aid ventilation in schools.
6. School leaders need to prepare for staff shortages over the coming weeks and - in extreme cases - this could lead to remote learning for selected students/year groups.

Longer Read

1. All students and staff, unless medically exempt, are required to wear face coverings in all internal areas of the school, including classrooms, when they return. Staff will remove face coverings to teach effectively, but at a safe distance from others. The vast majority of our students comply with this basic safety measure without complaint, but we still really appreciate you speaking with your child before Wednesday about the importance of wearing the face covering properly and not challenging school staff about the rule put in place by the government.
2. We have plans in place to test all students (for whom we have consent) for Covid-19 over the first two days of term. The only thing that will alter these plans is if our staffing levels are too low, in which case the delivery of the curriculum will be prioritised over testing. Please ensure that, if you have a supply of lateral flow devices, your child also tests on Tuesday night prior to returning to school.

STOKESLEY SCHOOL, STATION ROAD, STOKESLEY,
NORTH YORKSHIRE TS9 5AL

www.stokesleyschool.org

01642 710050





3. If students test positive for Covid-19, they are now able to return to school after the seventh day of isolation, provided they have tested negative on day 6 and 7. (Please refer to the infographic at the end of this letter for a full explanation of this rule change.)
4. Anyone who is fully vaccinated or under the age of 18 years 6 months identified as a close contact of a positive case, either by test and trace or through personal connections, can take daily lateral flow tests for 7 days and continue to leave the home - and attend school - provided the tests are negative. It is advisable, however, to exercise extra caution in this scenario by wearing a face covering whenever possible, taking extra sanitisation precautions, and avoiding unnecessary close physical contact with others.
5. The government plans to issue 7000 air purifiers to help with ventilation in schools. We look forward to seeing what difference this makes for the 24,400 schools in England each with multiple classrooms and communal areas. In our school, we will continue to follow our risk assessment, and ventilate spaces regularly by opening windows and doors.
6. Employers in all sectors are facing issues of staff shortages as life returns to normal following the Christmas break. We are monitoring our staffing levels closely, and will communicate with families swiftly if we need to put contingency measures in place. Although we hope to avoid this, we advise families with younger children to ensure home learning arrangements are in place in terms of supervision and house rules just in case we have no choice but to ask a year group to learn from home.

Families with students in Y11 and Y13 will undoubtedly be concerned about what the Omicron strain of Covid-19 and related absence will mean for the summer examinations. At this stage, the plan is still for examinations to go ahead. Rest assured, we are monitoring any updates closely and are confident that, should exams be cancelled again, our contingency plans are robust; the best approach for all of our students is not to worry and to focus on maintaining high attendance wherever possible and a motivated attitude towards their learning.

I have written directly to students too, via their school emails, to update them on their return to school/college; thank you for also taking the time to talk the additional measures through with them at home. Although there is uncertainty at the moment, it is nothing we are not used to after the last two years, and we are very much looking forward to seeing our students tomorrow.

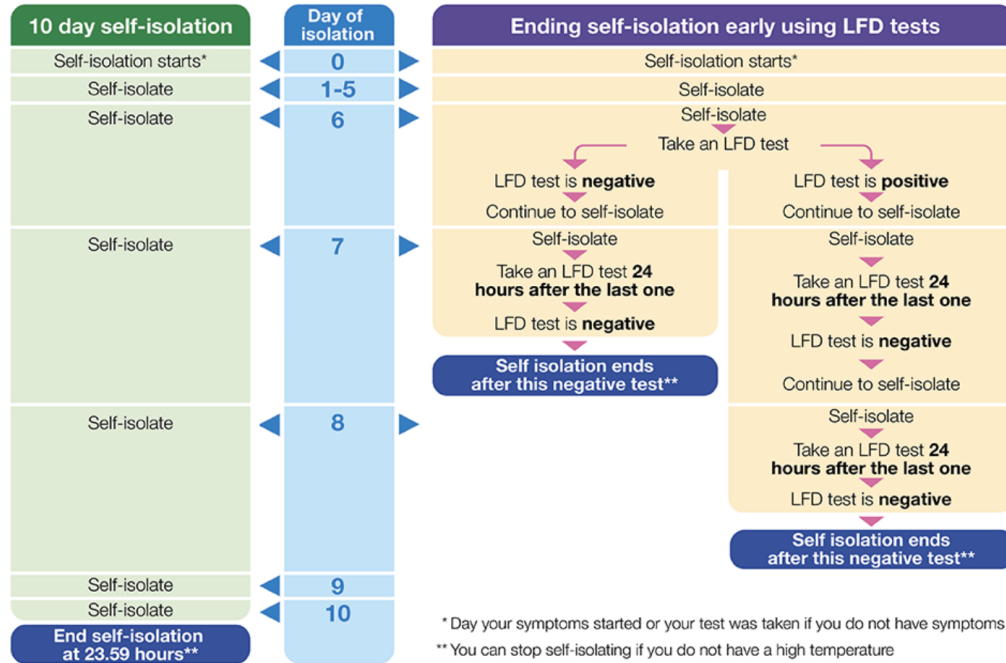
Yours faithfully,

Mrs H. L. Millett
Headteacher





Examples of when to end self-isolation if you have had COVID-19 symptoms or have received a positive COVID-19 test result



AMBITIOUS. RESPECTFUL. READY.

