

9th July 2021

Dear Parent/Carer,

I apologise for the length of this letter, but there is very important information for your son/daughter regarding the end of term, and more crucially, for the start of the new academic year in light of recent Government changes for schools regarding COVID-19.

Please kindly print off and keep a copy of this email for ease of reference.

Re: Changes to government guidance for schools regarding COVID-19

Following the announcement from the Secretary of State for Education on 6th July and now having received the updated Department for Education (DfE) guidance, I just wanted to give you an update about the School's plans for arrangements for the final 3 days of this term and start of the autumn term.

Summary of new DfE guidance

- As part of Step 4 of the government's roadmap, expected to take place on 19th July, '**bubbles**' will end for all children under 18, social distancing will no longer be necessary, and schools will not need to stagger start and finish times, although they can continue with existing arrangements until the end of term if they wish.
- The government is recommending that **face coverings** will no longer be necessary in any education setting.
- **Education settings still operating over the summer** will continue to test twice a week, with asymptomatic test kits still available to families over the summer break.
- From 16th August, the legal requirement to self-isolate for contacts of a positive case will end for everyone aged under 18, and for adults who have been fully vaccinated. This means that **from the autumn term, only those who test positive will need to self-isolate**.
- **From Step 4, (19th July) NHS test and trace will carry out contact tracing** in all education settings rather than it being run by the school or college. Those identified as close contacts will be advised to take a PCR test, and only need to isolate if they test positive. Children must self-isolate if they have symptoms of COVID-19 or a positive test result.
- **Two onsite Lateral Flow Device (LFD) tests should be taken by each secondary school student on return to school in September, followed by twice weekly testing at home.** The government will review testing requirements by the end of September. More details about this can be found below.
- **Staff should undertake twice weekly home tests** whenever they are on site until the end of September, when this will also be reviewed.
- Secondary schools should also retain a small **asymptomatic testing site** (ATS) on-site until further notice so they can offer testing to pupils who are unable to test themselves at home.
- All education staff are urged to get both vaccine doses if they have not yet done so, helping further reduce any potential disruption as a result of self-isolation.
- Where students do need to isolate from September, schools are expected to continue to provide high quality **remote education** to these students.
- **Assemblies** can recommence.
- **Control measures** should continue in schools. These include: ensuring good hygiene for everyone; maintaining appropriate cleaning regimes; keeping occupied spaces well ventilated and following public health advice on testing, self-isolation and managing confirmed cases of COVID-19.
- Schools will be expected to maintain **outbreak management plans** to cover the possibility that in some local areas, **it may become necessary to reintroduce 'bubbles'**

for a temporary period. Any decision would not be taken lightly. Outbreak plans should also cover **the possibility of the re-introduction of masks.**

- **Attendance** is mandatory for all students of compulsory school age and it is priority to ensure that as many children as possible regularly attend school.
- All **Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV) children** and young people should attend their education setting unless they are one of the very small number of children and young people under paediatric or other specialist care who have been advised by their GP or clinician not to attend.

As a result of the above, the following will apply:

- Our current **staggered arrival and finishing times and allocated gates** for particular year groups will continue until the end of this term and then cease to apply.
- **Bubbles** will continue to apply until the end of this term, at which point they will cease. From the start of the autumn term after students have completed their LFD tests, students should arrive at either the Brookdale Road gate or Higham Lane pedestrian gate (not the Shanklin Drive gate) and depart from the Brookdale Road gate, Higham Lane pedestrian gate or the Shanklin Drive gate. **Please kindly note, while the LFD testing is taking place, only students who are coming in for the LFD tests should enter and depart via the Higham Lane pedestrian gate.** All other students should enter via the Brookdale Road or Shanklin Drive gates. Once our LFD testing is complete, we will revert to our normal arrangements for gates for arrival and departure indicated above.
- The school will commence on-site **Lateral Flow Device (LFD) testing** from Wednesday 1st September up to and including Friday 10th September. More details on this are attached.
- Whilst **face coverings** are no longer *required* to be worn from 19th July, students and staff will still be able to wear them if they choose to do so. This is a personal decision.
- Our normal expectations regarding **school uniform and personal appearance** will apply. Please note, **from the start of the autumn term, students who have PE should come to school in full school uniform** as they will be changing into PE kit before their PE lesson.

Arrangements at Higham Lane School – September 2021

From the start of the 2021-22 academic year, the School will return to its pre-Covid **school day timings**. **Lunchtime** will revert to one sitting as before. Timings for these are indicated below.

School day timings

Mon,Tue,Thu,Fri

Registration:	8.50
Period 1:	9.10
Period 2:	10.10
Break:	11.10
Period 3:	11.30
Lunch:	12.30
Period 4:	13.15
Period 5:	14.15
Dismissal:	15.15

Weds

Registration:	8.50
Period 1:	9.10
Period 2:	10.05

Break:	11.00
Period 3:	11.20
Lunch:	12.15
Period 4:	13.00
Period 5:	14.00
Dismissal:	14.55

Timings for Student Progress Evening days

Registration	8.50am
Period 1:	9.00am
Period 2:	9.50am
Break:	10.40am
Period 3:	11.00am
Period 4:	11.50am
Lunch:	12.40pm
Period 5:	1.25pm
Dismissal:	2.15pm

Lateral Flow Device (LFD) testing

In line with the latest DfE guidance, the School will be completing on-site LFD testing for all students in September. It has been deemed necessary by the DfE that two LFD tests are undertaken at the start of the autumn term. Following this, students will be expected to home test with LFD tests until the end of September, at which point this will be reviewed by the government. In terms of **consent** for these tests to be taken, for those students we have tested previously in school earlier this year, **we will use the consent previously given; if anyone wishes to withdraw this consent, they should kindly inform the School** by using the contactus@highamlaneschool.co.uk email address. We have written separately to next year's Year 7 parents/carers to seek their consent and separate arrangements will be made for our new Year 12 students.

Please kindly find attached further details on the dates and times for the LFD testing.

Please kindly note, while the LFD testing is taking place, only students who are coming in for the LFD tests should enter and depart via the Higham Lane pedestrian gate. All other students should enter via the Brookdale Road or Shanklin Drive gates. Once our LFD testing is complete, we will revert to our normal arrangements for gates for arrival and departure indicated above.

Staggered start to autumn term – please kindly note the following changes as a result of government guidance for schools:

As you will see, we will operate a **staggered return of students, rather than all students returning to school on the same day**, in line with the DfE guidance. With this staggered return of students, this will also impact upon when your son/daughter begins to attend school at the start of the autumn term.

Please note that year groups noted below correspond to the year group your son/daughter will be entering at the start of the 2021/22 academic year, not their current year group. The following will therefore apply:

- Students will begin to return to school the day after their second LFD test is completed. All students will be in school full-time from Friday 10th September.
- Please note that students will spend the first two lessons prior to break of their first day back in school with their form tutor. Given that form tutors were also due to be teaching

their specialist subjects during these lessons, we have made the decision to delay students' arrival on their second day (and in the case of Year 7 and Year 13, their third day) back in school until breaktime.

Date	Arrangements
Monday 6th September	Only students undertaking an LFD test, as indicated in the attached timetable, will be on site and only for the duration of the test.
Tuesday 7th September	As well as students undertaking LFD tests as indicated in the attached timetable, the new Year 7 intake and Year 12 will attend Sixth Form all day. Year 7 students should assemble in Chine Hall at 8.50am. Year 12 students should assemble in the Conference Room in the Sixth Form Centre at 8.50am. Year 13 students will attend from period 3. Year 13 students should assemble in the Conference Room in the Sixth Form Centre at 11.30am.
Wednesday 8th September	As well as students undertaking LFD tests as indicated in the attached timetable, Year 8 and Year 11 will attend all day. Year 8 students should assemble in Coombe Hall at 8.50am. Year 11 students should report to the tennis courts at 8.50am. Year 7 and Year 12 and 13 should only attend from breaktime onwards, not all day. Year 7 should report to Chine Hall at 11am. Year 12 and 13 should go straight to their normal period 3 lesson at 11.20am.
Thursday 9th September	Year 9 and 10 should attend all day. Year 9 students should assemble in Chine Hall at 8.50am. Year 10 students should assemble in Coombe Hall at 8.50am. Year 7, 8, 11,12 and 13 students should attend from breaktime onwards, not all day. Year 7 should report to Chine Hall at 11.20am. Year 8, 11,12 and 13 should go straight to their normal period 3 lesson at 11.20am.

So based on the information in the table above and on the attached timetable, the following arrangements are in place for each year group:-

Year 7	Wednesday 1st September and Monday 6th September – attend school for LFD test only Tuesday 7th September – attend school all day from 8.50am Wednesday 8th September – attend school from break (11am) onwards Thursday 9th September – attend school from break (11.10am) onwards Friday 11th September - attend school all day from 8.50am
Year 8	Thursday 2nd September and Tuesday 7th September – attend school for LFD test only Wednesday 8th September – attend school all day from 8.50am Thursday 9th September – attend school from break (11.10am) onwards

	Friday 11th September - attend school all day from 8.50am
Year 9	Friday 3rd September and Wednesday 8th September – attend school for LFD test only Thursday 9th September – attend school all day from 8.50am Friday 11th September - attend school all day from 8.50am
Year 10	Friday 3rd September and Wednesday 8th September – attend school for LFD test only Thursday 9th September – attend school all day from 8.50am Friday 11th September - attend school all day from 8.50am
Year 11	Thursday 2nd September and Tuesday 7th September – attend school for LFD test only Wednesday 8th September – attend school all day from 8.50am Thursday 9th September – attend school from break (11.10am) onwards Friday 11th September - attend school all day from 8.50am
Year 12	Wednesday 1st September and Monday 6th September – attend school for LFD test only Tuesday 7th September - attend Sixth Form all day from 8.50 Wednesday 8th September -attend Sixth Form for period 3 lesson (11.20am) onwards Thursday 9th September -attend Sixth Form for period 3 lesson (11.30 am) onwards Friday 11th September - attend Sixth Form all day from 8.50am
Year 13	Wednesday 1st September and Monday 6th September – attend school for LFD test only Tuesday 7th September – attend Sixth Form for period 3 lesson (11.30am) onwards Wednesday 8th September – attend Sixth Form for period 3 lesson (11.20am) onwards Thursday 9th September – attend Sixth Form for period 3 lesson (11.30am) onwards Friday 11th September - attend Sixth Form all day from 8.50am

During the LFD testing period, students arriving on site for LFD tests should enter and leave via the Higham Lane gate only. Students arriving on site for lessons should enter and leave via the Shanklin Drive and Brookdale Road gates only.

Students can attend in non-uniform for LFD tests but must be in full school uniform from their first day back in school.

Control measures

We will continue to enforce control measures: ensuring good hygiene for everyone; maintaining appropriate cleaning regimes; keeping occupied spaces well ventilated and

following public health advice on testing, self-isolation and managing confirmed cases of COVID-19.

In line with government guidance, we will continue to ensure that students clean their hands regularly with sanitiser and use the “catch it, bin it, kill it” method. **Students should therefore continue to bring a small bottle of hand sanitiser and a small pack of tissues into school each day please.**

When an individual develops COVID-19 symptoms or has a positive test

We will follow the guidance, which clearly states: “When an individual develops COVID-19 symptoms or has a positive test, pupils, staff and other adults should follow public health advice on when to self-isolate and what to do. **They should not come into school if they have symptoms, have had a positive test result or other reasons requiring them to stay at home due to the risk of them passing on COVID-19** (for example, they are required to quarantine). **If anyone in your school develops COVID-19 symptoms, however mild, you should send them home and they should follow public health advice.** For everyone with symptoms, they should avoid using public transport and, wherever possible, be collected by a member of their family or household. The household (including any siblings) should follow the PHE stay at home guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection”.

Confirmatory PCR tests

The guidance clearly states:

“Staff and pupils with a positive LFD test result should self-isolate in line with the stay at home guidance. They will also need to get a free PCR test to check if they have COVID-19. Whilst awaiting the PCR result, the individual should continue to self-isolate. If the PCR test is taken within 2 days of the positive lateral flow test, and is negative, it overrides the self-test LFD test and the pupil or member of staff can return to school, as long as the individual doesn’t have COVID-19 symptoms.”

Student wellbeing and support

We appreciate that some students may be experiencing a variety of emotions in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, such as anxiety, stress or low mood. We will continue to support these students and their families.

I hope this information is helpful. I am sorry it is so detailed, but we have had to carefully consider the latest guidance and have aimed to keep you informed about arrangements as soon as possible. We appreciate that there is a lot to take in! We are really looking forward to the next school year and getting back to what we hope will be some degree of normality. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the School on the contactus@highamlaneschool.co.uk email.

Thank you for your support and understanding.

Yours sincerely,

P. Kelly
Headteacher