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## **Principals Update: Return to School - various reminders, advice, and FAQ's**

Dear Parents and Carers,

Firstly, a warm welcome to the new school year. It has been uplifting to see the energy and enthusiasm that our students have returned with. Thank you for all the work you would have done in terms of getting them ready. At its very heart, education really is a partnership between home, school, and our students.

I have been lucky enough to speak to our students in assemblies and see them learning hard in our classrooms and outdoor spaces. We are all mindful that we need to maintain the controls that we have in place to keep the school COVID safe and after a week of LFD testing, we have had no positive test results. Much thanks must go to the team in school that have been putting aside their usual work to make that happen.

As we return to school I thought it would be useful to highlight a few reminders and provide answers to some frequently asked questions which are based on call or emails from parents. These are outlined below and include a link to the latest government advice.

Best wishes

Nick Lewis

Principal

## Frequently asked questions and advice

### Latest Government advice about returning to school

The following link provides the latest government advice about returning to school:

[What Parents and Carers Need to Know - Govt?](#)

### How can I help my child be ready for Fairfield?

Please help us to ensure students are ready for school this term by:

- Checking that students have an ample supply of water in a sturdy water bottle, ideally enough to last the day. We do not provide disposal drinking facilities but do have water bottle refill points and taps.
- Reminding students, where consent is given, to take home COVID tests. These are encouraged to be taken on a two-week basis and will be available from tutor bases from next week.
- Making sure students have a good outdoor coat that will cope with cold weather and light rain. Our default is to ask students to spend break and lunch outdoors in all but the most difficult of weather. It encourages activity rather than sitting. When the weather is too cold or too wet, we use our indoor space.

### What control measures do you have in place?

All our hygiene measures, cleaning systems, and efforts to keep classrooms well ventilated will remain. Our full Risk assessment is published on our website. We have a local contingency plan in place if there are significant outbreaks. This may require greater levels of isolation and community testing or other measures like the return of wearing masks in communal areas. This will be advised by local Public Health Officials on a school-by-school basis.

### What if my child is close contact of a positive case at school?

Children under the age of 18 years old are no longer required to self-isolate in the way they were last academic year. Instead, children will be contacted by NHS Test & Trace, informed they have been in close contact with a positive case and advised to take a PCR test. They can attend school until they have the result of the test.

### What if someone in my house tests positive for COVID, should my child attend school?

Yes, the guidance says from 16 August, if you are fully vaccinated or aged under 18 years and 6 months you will not be required to self-isolate if you are a contact of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19. For example, if an adult in a household tests positive, any children in the household should continue to come to school, unless specifically advised otherwise by medical authorities.

## What if my child has COVID symptoms?

If your child has symptoms, they should self-isolate, and you should inform us of their absence due to COVID.

In accordance with Government guidance, anyone with COVID-19 symptoms or a positive test result should stay at home and self-isolate immediately. When you or your child has symptoms of COVID-19, you should arrange to have a PCR test as soon as possible. This still applies even if you have received one or more doses of COVID-19 vaccine. If you live in the same household as someone with COVID-19, you should stay at home and self-isolate. However, from 16 August, if you are fully vaccinated or aged under 18 years and 6 months you will not be required to self-isolate if you are a contact of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19. For example, if an adult in a household tests positive, any children in the household should continue to come to school.

PCR tests can be booked online through the NHS Test & Trace website or by calling 119.

Results will be recorded with NHS Test and Trace automatically, but you should also communicate the results for children to the education or childcare setting during term time. **What if my child is clinically extremely vulnerable?**

Pupils who are clinically extremely vulnerable should attend school and college including out-of-school settings. If you are a parent or student and feeling anxious about attendance, you should speak to us about your concerns to find a way forward.

## What happens if my child's 'at home' (self-reported) LFD test result is positive?

If your child's LFD test was taken at home (self-reported), they should self-isolate immediately, and you should also arrange for them to have a follow-up PCR test as soon as possible. Please let the school know. If the follow-up PCR test result is negative, they can stop self-isolating, again please inform school.

## Will the school be contacted by "Contact Tracing"?

If your child gets a positive PCR test result, NHS Test and Trace will contact you, using the details you registered when ordering the PCR test. You and/or your child will be asked a series of specific questions designed to identify who your child has been in close contact with. Being in an education or childcare setting with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 will not necessarily mean a person is identified as a close contact.

You will be asked to provide the contact details, if you know them, of any of the individuals – or their parents or guardians – who have been identified as close contacts. NHS Test and Trace will then get in touch with these close contacts and provide appropriate instructions or advice.

## What are the new dismissal times?

The new dismissal times for September are:

**Year 7 and Year 11** will leave school at **3.25pm**

**Year 10, Year 9, and Year 8** will leave school at **3.15pm**

## Are there other changes for September?

**Catering** We are awaiting supplies of both building materials and specialist catering equipment to allow us to offer our fully expanded hot food offer - we are expecting this delay to be resolved before Term 2, until then we will continue our offer from Term 6.

**Year 7** continue to have a separate zone, to support transition, as has been in place for the last 5 years. We are following up this year's extensive landscaping with additional seating and tables and improvements to the playground surface, including the installation of hoops for sports. We expect completion by Term 2

Year 7 will have dedicated food serving area, serving both hot and cold meals available for preordering, once catering facilities allow. Following feedback, the focus will be on healthy, varied "Street food" style menu choices from a variety of cultures.

During wet lunch Year 7 will be using the Year 7 under covered area and our canteen space.

Year 7 will enter the school in the morning at the rear of the sports hall. At break and lunch, they will enter at the rear of the atrium.

**Year 9 and 8** share a much larger zone, including access to planned new playground facilities and a new dedicated food pod, serving food as above. Further landscaping is planned for this zone, including stepped terraced seating incorporating raised beds. We expect completion by Term 2

During wet lunch Year 9 will be based in our Sports Hall and Year 8 will be based in our Drama and Dance Studios

**Year 10 and Year 11** will share a combined area at the front of the school that has the recently installed outdoor gym, raised bed seating and tensile structure. Based on student feedback we have installed additional tables and seating. Students are served lunches as above from the Atrium area.

During wet lunch Year 10 and 11 will be based in our Atrium.

All students will get opportunities to mix with other year groups via our house system which is used for a variety of planned events throughout the year as well as during mixed year group clubs at lunch and afterschool.

## Are there afterschool and lunchtime clubs, trips, or visits?

We are planning that these activities can fully recommence from Term 1 onwards with our full range of activities being offered. As ever, this relies on both staff and student uptake to be in place for events to happen. Further details to follow.

### An International Academy

Principal: **Mr Nick Lewis**

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