



4 January 2022

Dear Parents and Carers

### **NEW YEAR UPDATE**

Firstly, may we wish you all a Happy New Year. We would also take this opportunity to remind all parents, carers and students of the revised return to school arrangements for this week: all students who have consented will be tested on Tuesday, please check which time your child is due in for testing.

All students return on Wednesday 5 January at the normal times. Where a student is not taking part in the testing on site, we encourage them to complete a test at home before returning to school, doing so will help reduce transmission.

### **Government Updates**

Over recent weeks there have been a number of updates to government guidance which we have attempted to summarise below. The information is correct at the time of writing but is subject to change from local or national government:

### **Face coverings**

The government are now recommending face coverings are **worn in classrooms as well as in indoor communal areas such as corridors**. This applies to students, staff and adult visitors unless exempt.

Face coverings should fit securely around the face to cover the nose and mouth. Please ensure all students come to school with a suitable face covering. Given the increased use it is essential that individuals have a suitable supply and may wish to consider bringing a spare to wear if theirs becomes damp or dirty during the day.

When wearing or removing a face covering the government advice is:

- Wash or sanitise hands thoroughly before putting on or removing a face covering.
- Only handle the straps, ties or clips and avoid touching the part in contact with the mouth and nose.
- Avoid taking it off and putting it back on a lot in quick succession.
- Change the face covering if it becomes damp - once removed store reusable face coverings in a plastic bag until it can be washed (Single-use face coverings should be disposed of in household waste and do not recycle).

### **Visitors**

In line with government guidance we strongly encourage all visitors (including parents) to take a lateral flow device (LFD) test before entering the school premises. Visitors are also expected to wear a face covering unless exempt. Visitors should only be on site by prior appointment.

### **COVID cases**

Students 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 are required to stay at home due to the risk of them passing on COVID-19 (for example, they are required to quarantine).**

If a student develops COVID-19 symptoms whilst in school, however mild, they should be sent home, students with a positive lateral flow device test result should self-isolate. They will need to get a free PCR test to check if they have COVID-19 and continue to self-isolate whilst awaiting the result. 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 can return to school, as long as the individual does not have COVID-19 symptoms.

**If a student tests positive via a lateral flow device test or PCR then they must self-isolate for 10 full days. They can stop self-isolating after 7 days if they do rapid lateral flow test on days 6 and 7 and:**

- both tests are negative
- they did both tests at least 24 hours apart
- they do not have a high temperature

**If both these test results are negative, and they do not have a high temperature, they may end their self-isolation after the second negative test result and return to school from day 8.**

**Any student who is unable to take lateral flow device tests will need to complete the full 10-day period of self-isolation.**

Please ensure all student absences are reported promptly by emailing: [attendance@featherstone.academy](mailto:attendance@featherstone.academy)

We are required to keep a log of all COVID-19 cases within our school community. To help us to do this please ensure you include the following details in your absence email:

- Last date the student was in school
- Symptom start date (if any) and a brief description of any symptoms
- Test date and type, result date and result
- Expected return to school date

### **Close contacts**

Students (aged between 5 and 18 years and 6 months) who are identified as a close contact of someone with COVID-19 **should take a lateral flow device test every day for seven days and continue to attend school as normal unless they have a positive result or develop symptoms.**

Those who have tested positive within the past 90 days are now advised to undertake lateral flow testing due to the potential of reinfection posed by the omicron variant.

### **Vaccination**

Last term the government confirmed that young people aged 12-17 would be offered a second dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine at a minimum of 12 weeks from the first dose. Healthy school-aged children aged 12-15 will be able to receive their vaccination in school and we await further information.

### **Lateral Flow Device Tests**

Regular testing is an important way of identifying cases and reducing transmission. All students are encouraged to continue to test twice weekly (or daily if identified as a close contact as explained above). Kits will continue to be issued in form time.

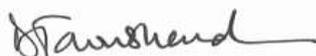
### **Other controls**

In addition to all the above we continue to have in place a series of ongoing measures:

- We have three separate lunches and breaks to minimise contact between year groups.
- Students should wash or sanitise their hands on arrival at every lesson.
- Doors and windows remain open as far as possible to aid ventilation.
- Whilst coats cannot be worn in school students may wish to consider the layers they wear.
- Enhanced cleaning remains in place, particularly of contact points around school.

Thank you to all our students and parents for your ongoing efforts and support as we continue to navigate the challenges posed by COVID-19, and take the necessary steps to reduce transmission and minimise disruption to education. We are most successful when we work together as a school community (staff, students and parents) and we look forward to working together over the year ahead.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D Townshend', written in a cursive style.

Ms D Townshend  
Principal