



22 October 2021

Dear Parent / Carer

As we approach half-term, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your support in making the return to school since September as smooth as possible. In the face of continued disruption and uncertainty caused by Covid, I have been extremely impressed with our students and staff who have shown incredible positivity and resilience, with students settling swiftly into their routines and studies. A quick review of this week's e-Bulletin highlights just a few of the positive experiences our students have been a part of this half-term.

Please find below an update on some important actions and key information for after the break.

Year 11 and 13 Exams

Earlier this week, parents of Year 11 and 13 students will have received this [letter](#) with an update on the arrangements and adaptations to examinations next year. Please take time to read this carefully and discuss the implications with your child. The school is committed to supporting all students to achieve their very best grades, whatever the assessments might look like next year. Likewise, it is important that students understand the commitment and hard work required over the coming months as they prepare for these. Both Years 11 and 13 have trial exams scheduled for the coming half term, in the run-up to the Christmas break.

COVID Vaccinations

When we return after half-term, I hope that we will receive confirmation of the catch-up programme for students who did not receive their vaccinations in school earlier this term. We will, of course, keep you updated as soon as we have any further information.

Additional Safety Measures from November

Since my letter, dated 26 September, which detailed the Public Health team advice regarding the re-introduction of additional safety measures at Ashlyns, we have been carefully monitoring the infection rates and implications for the school. I have been impressed by the way in which our students have responded to the additional safety measures introduced at the end of September. These measures were reintroduced to support the safe education of students.

At the time I explained that these would be reviewed for the half-term break - again, in consultation with the Public Health Team. Having done so, we have been advised to keep the measures in place when we return, as well as introduce an additional layer of testing as detailed below:

Daily Lateral Flow Testing (Saturday 30 October to Friday 5 November inclusive)

The Public Health team has advised staff and students to move from twice-weekly testing to daily testing during this week i.e. starting the final weekend of the half-term break. Lateral Flow Test kits will be made available to students on Friday 22 October through their tutors. Please do ensure your child adheres to this daily testing schedule, which will be an important part of suppressing infection rates. We will text a reminder prior to the start of this period.

Please remember if your child exhibits any symptoms - or if they are identified as a close contact - you should book a PCR test as soon as possible.

Face Coverings in communal areas

Face coverings in communal areas will continue to be expected (unless exemptions apply). Students who wish to do so, will be supported to also wear face coverings in lessons. Whilst we have been pleased with the students' adherence to this important, additional safety measure, it has been disappointing that some students have been arriving at school without their face covering - and some have discarded their disposable face mask at the end of the day on their way home. Therefore, please do remind your child about the importance of coming to school with their own face covering and please help us to reinforce the point that public littering is both antisocial and environmentally damaging. Use of a reusable, washable face mask is also more environmentally friendly and should be encouraged.

In addition to the testing and face coverings, the following measures will continue:

- Cleaning protocols for classrooms between lessons will continue after half-term.
- Assemblies for whole year groups will not take place until further notice.
- We will continue to keep classrooms well ventilated. With this in mind, students will be allowed to wear coats in classrooms for the remainder of the term when they come back after the break.
- Visitors, who are not exempt, will be required to wear face coverings in communal areas.
- Other events and activities, which involve large numbers of visitors indoors, will continue to take place digitally or be suspended until further notice.
- Other activities such as extra-curricular sport, trips and visits will continue to be risk-assessed on an individual basis and protocols communicated directly to those involved.

As always, I appreciate your support in reinforcing the importance of following these safety measures to your children, as well as reminding them of the precautions they can take when out of school. This will be especially important over the half-term break. We will continue to keep all the additional measures under review and work in partnership with the Public Health team.

Thank you, as ever, for your co-operation; we wish those affected by coronavirus (COVID-19) a speedy recovery.

And finally, on a more positive note, I would also like to thank all those who have been involved in the production of our digital Open Event resources, along with those created for the 'Into the Sixth' event, which are available on the school's website; any prospective parent would be so impressed with seeing the school in action and with our exemplary students.

Wishing you all a good half-term break.

Yours sincerely



James Shapland
Headteacher

[Appendices A and B: General COVID Information and How to book a test online when you have been identified as a close contact but do not have symptoms yourself](#)