



29 November 2021

Dear Parent/Guardian

Once again I am sorry to say that I am having to write to you in relation to COVID 19.

You will be aware that, over the weekend, the government made a number of announcements to increase community protection against the emergence of a new variant of the virus (Omicron). Our COVID specific school Risk Assessment has been updated in light of the news about the Omicron variant. It can be found on our [website here](#).

### **Face coverings**

We were informed yesterday by the Department for Education of the requirement to ask students to strictly follow the guidance to wear face coverings in corridors and communal areas.

Please could you therefore ensure that you child comes to school **every day** with a face covering/mask. We only have limited supplies of these and it is not affordable for the school to provide them.

### **Exemptions from wearing a face covering**

If your child is exempt from wearing a face covering and you have not already done so, please can we ask that you email in to [meroffice@maidenerleghtrust.org](mailto:meroffice@maidenerleghtrust.org) to let us know. We can then create a lanyard for your child to avoid them being asked by members of staff to put on a face covering in corridors and communal areas.

### **Isolation in the event of close contact**

Please remember that our most recent guidance is that students confirmed as close contacts of someone who has the COVID virus will need to produce a negative PCR test result before coming into school. In addition, new guidance has been added to say that anybody confirmed as a close contact of somebody who has tested positive with the Omicron variant will need to isolate for a full 10 days, irrelevant of their vaccination status. This will be confirmed by the NHS test and trace service. In this case please let the school know, with proof of the instruction to isolate. Work will be made available on Google Classroom for all students in this situation.

### **Staff absence pressures**

In common with many schools in the area, we are already experiencing very high levels of staff absence. We will do everything in our power to keep the school fully open to all students, but it may be necessary to ask year groups to work remotely on a rota basis. I will try to give you as much notice of this as possible. The exceptional levels of absence are partly COVID related, but is also due to other flu and common wintertime ailments which seem to have returned with a vengeance this term. In addition, the availability of supply staff is severely limited.

### **Year 9 Parents' Information evening – Wednesday 1 December**

This has now been changed to a virtual event. Mr Rabin, Head of Year 9 will be contacting year 9 parents with further information about how you can attend.

### **GCSE certificates evening**

This was due to take place on Thursday 9 December. Unfortunately, we have taken the decision to postpone this event until the new year.

### **Visitors to school**

We are trying to limit the number of visitors into school to limit any potential virus transmission. When contacting members of staff please, if possible, use email or a phone call. Alternatively, a virtual call may be arranged. If it is vital that you come into school please make an appointment before arriving as safety and cleaning measures will need to be put in place.

### **Covid testing within school, January 2022**

We have received confirmation from the DfE that we will be asked to test all students where consent has been provided on the return to school in January 2022. Students will only need to be tested once, using a double nasal swab only. As previously, students will be asked to come in to be tested on the day before they return to school. This will have an impact on the return to school in January 2022 and we will confirm arrangements as soon as possible, it is likely that testing will commence on 5 January 2022. If you gave consent for your child to be tested in September, you do not need to do anything further. If you had not previously provided consent and now wish to do so, please complete the form available [here](#). **Please note the deadline to provide consent is 9:00am on Monday 13 December 2021, we will be unable to test your child in school in January if consent is not provided by this date.**

Yours sincerely



**Mr A Johnson**  
Headteacher