



02/01/2022

Dear Parents, Guardians, Carers

We hope you have had a restful Christmas break and would like to take this opportunity to wish you a Happy New Year. We have really appreciated your support over the past two years in particular in trying to achieve the very best for your children in these challenging times.

This year we were delighted to congratulate two of our Members who received honours. Lee Miller received an MBE and Angela Barry an OBE. Our Chair, Nikki King, finally officially received her CBE which was delayed due to COVID restrictions. All these awards were given for services to Education and we are pleased that they have chosen our Trust to share their expertise to help our students.

We have this morning received the latest update from the Department for Education which clarifies the Governments thinking concerning many of the following issues given the COVID situation at this time: the importance of the children going to school, on-site testing in secondary schools, the twice weekly testing procedure, parental meetings with school personnel, changes made to the period of isolation, what to do if you come in close contact to somebody testing positive for COVID, the wearing of masks in classrooms in secondary schools, secondary school examinations continuing as planned and the possibility of needing to resort to home learning on occasion.

Face-to-face education remains a top priority although this has to be balanced against the wider public health risks brought by Covid-19. It is stressed that vaccinations remain the best defence against Covid-19 and that is why every child and young person aged 12 and over is eligible to receive the vaccine.

Testing remains a priority. All secondary school students should undertake one on-site test on return to boost testing participation and help reduce transmission after a period of social mixing over the holidays. Parents of our secondary school students will be aware of the staggered start arrangements at both Greenacre and WGS for this coming Tuesday with both schools reverting to the normal timings on Wednesday.

All staff and students are also strongly encouraged to test twice a week using an LFD test and to report all results to [the NHS](#) and to their setting.

On occasion, it will be necessary for parents to have meetings with school personnel. We would respectfully encourage such meetings to take place remotely whenever possible and

if a face to face meeting is absolutely necessary, then confirmation of a negative LFD outcome will be required for the day in question.

Since Wednesday 22 December, the 10 day self-isolation period for people who record a positive PCR test result for COVID-19 has been reduced to 7 days in most circumstances, unless you cannot test for any reason.

Individuals may now take LFD tests on day 6 and day 7 of their self-isolation period. Those who receive two negative test results are no longer required to complete 10 full days of self-isolation. The first test must be taken no earlier than day 6 of the self-isolation period and tests must be taken 24 hours apart. This also applies to children under 5, with LFD testing at parental or guardian discretion. If both these test results are negative, and you do not have a high temperature, you may end your self-isolation after the second negative test result and return to your education setting from day 8.

Anyone who is unable to take LFD tests will need to complete the full 10 day period of self-isolation. Further information is available in the [stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed COVID-19 infection](#).

People who are fully vaccinated, or children and young people aged between 5 and 18 years and 6 months, identified as a close contact of someone with COVID-19, should take an LFD test every day for seven days and continue to attend their setting as normal, unless they have a positive test result or develop symptoms at any time.

From Tuesday 4 January, the Government is requesting that face coverings should be worn in classrooms and teaching spaces in secondary schools. The measure is short term only and will be reviewed on the 26 January. Concerning parents of our secondary school students, it would be appreciated if you could ensure that your son or daughter leaves for school each morning with a mask during this period of time.

For some secondary school students, examinations and assessments will be taking place early in the new year as planned so that they are given the chance to demonstrate what they know having worked so hard in preparation.

Finally, parents might be aware that the infection rates in both Gravesham and Medway remain exceedingly high. We are currently being made aware that some members of staff are sick and we feel that it is only right to alert you to the possibility of your child being forced to revert to home learning on occasion if necessary. We of course will try and avoid this eventuality wherever possible.

We apologise for this letter being longer than we would like but there is a lot of information which we feel will be of help to you. Please rest assured in these uncertain times that we will keep you fully up to date with any changes and give you as much notice as we can.

Enjoy the last days of the holiday.

Nikki King CBE and Andy Reese CEO