



Spalding High School

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Headmistress Mrs M Anderson B.Ed

6th January 2022

Dear Parent/Carer

Happy New Year! I very much hope that you have had a restful and enjoyable holiday and would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a happy and healthy 2022.

Students have now fully returned following our staggered start and today is the first full day back in a normal day of lessons. Well done (again) to students for their patience during the testing process. It is a staggering logistical feat to test over 100 students per hour and hopefully our bus students in particular, had less time spent waiting in the sports hall. Thank you also to our amazing Covid Test team for running the tests so efficiently.

New operational guidance has been issued to schools as a result of the rising levels of community transmission of COVID. This letter contains important updated information regarding school processes for the next few weeks. Please read it carefully and keep it somewhere safe.

Current infection rates and the Omicron variant.

As we know from recent announcements, the current community infection rate is increasing rapidly as a result of the transmissibility of Omicron. We have seen an increase in the School's number of positive cases in recent weeks that would reflect this national trend.

The three widely known symptoms of Covid remain:

- A high temperature.
- A continuous cough.
- A loss of smell and/or taste.

Students should not attend school with any of these symptoms, no matter how mild.

We are currently seeing a very different range of symptoms in students who have tested positive. Whilst these have not been added to the official UK symptom list, The World Health Organisation have listed the following as common symptoms of Omicron:

- Scratchy throat
- Lower back pain
- Runny nose/congestion
- Headache
- Fatigue
- Sneezing
- Night sweats
- Body aches
- Upset tummy/diarrhoea.

If students are in any doubt regarding their symptoms, no matter how mild, they should complete an LFD test at home before travelling to school. If students need additional LFD test kits, they should speak to Mrs Pryke or Mrs Jarvis.

Key Health and Hygiene messages:

These remain unchanged. Students should:

- Catch it – Kill it – Bin it if they cough or sneeze.
- Spend time outside of form rooms as much as possible if they wish to socialise at break and lunch time.
- Keep rooms ventilated with enough windows open to feel the fresh air.
- Wash their hands or sanitise regularly. This includes as they enter the buildings and each classroom.
- Wear their facemask (see below).

Facemasks

As you will no doubt already have seen in the media, until 26th January (at the earliest), the Government have extended their recommendation to students in Year 7 and above, to wear face coverings in lessons as well as when in communal areas and on public/designated school transport. Facemasks do not need to be worn when outside nor when participating in physical activity such as in PE lessons.

School LFD testing twice weekly:

Students need to return to their normal LFD testing cycle of a Sunday and Wednesday and remember to submit their results to both the School's Teams assignment and the NHS. A huge amount of additional work is created for the Covid Team if students forget to do this.

Visitors on-site

One of the new and hopefully temporary measures is the restriction of visitors into school. Until 26th January (at the earliest), schools have also been asked to strongly encourage any visitor to take an LFD test before coming into school. Parents/carers should speak to a member of staff regarding their need to visit in person before coming into school. The member of staff you are scheduled to meet with will assist with the provision of an LFD test kit if you do not already have access to one.

Self-isolation periods for those with a positive PCR Result.

Since Wednesday 22 December, the 10-day self-isolation period for people who record a positive PCR test result for COVID has been reduced to seven days in most circumstances, unless you cannot test for any reason. Individuals may now take LFD tests on day six and day seven 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 six of the self-isolation period and tests must be taken 24 hours apart. 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 School from day seven.

Anyone who is unable to take LFD tests will need to complete the full 10 day period of self-isolation.

We ask that parents/carers confirm the two negative LFD results with Mrs Earl, our Attendance Officer and confirm the return date with her so that we know when to expect students back in school.

Positive LFD Test results and confirmatory PCR Tests:

From 11th January in England, those who receive a positive LFD test result will be required to self-isolate immediately and **will not** be required to take a confirmatory PCR test.

The government have said that this is a temporary measure while COVID rates remain high across the UK and that whilst levels of COVID are high, the vast majority of people with positive LFD results can be confident that they have COVID.

Lateral flow tests are taken by people who do not have COVID symptoms. Anyone who develops any of the three main COVID symptoms should stay at home and self-isolate and take a PCR test. They must self-isolate if they get a positive test result, even if they have had a recent negative lateral flow test – these rules have not changed.

Under this new approach, anyone who receives a positive LFD test result should [report their result on GOV.UK](#) and must self-isolate immediately but will not need to take a follow-up PCR test. After reporting a positive LFD test result, they will be contacted by NHS Test and Trace so that their contacts can be traced and must continue to self-isolate.

There are a few exceptions to this revised approach.

- Those who are eligible for the £500 Test and Trace Support Payment (TTSP) will still be asked to take a confirmatory PCR if they receive a positive LFD result, to enable them to access financial support.
- The Test and Trace support Payment Information can be found here: [Apply for a Test and Trace Support Payment - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- Those participating in research or surveillance programmes may still be asked to take a follow-up PCR test, according to the research or surveillance protocol.
- Those who are at particular risk of becoming seriously ill from COVID have been identified by the NHS as being potentially eligible for new treatments. They will be receiving a PCR test kit at home by mid-January to use if they develop symptoms or if they get a positive LFD result, as they may be eligible for new treatments if they receive a positive PCR result. This group should use these priority PCR tests when they have symptoms as it will enable prioritised laboratory handling.

The new advice can be found in full here:

[Confirmatory PCR tests to be temporarily suspended for positive lateral flow test results - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Critical Key Worker parents/parents of vulnerable children:

The Government have updated their advice for parents who are critical key workers parents/parents of vulnerable children. It can be found here:

[Critical workers and vulnerable children who can access schools or educational settings - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Guidance for households with positive cases:

The Government have updated the Stay At Home advice for those households with a positive case. It can be found here:

[Stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID\) infection - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

I would like to continue to reassure parents/carers and students that we are doing all that we can to limit the spread of Covid within school. We are proactive with our Risk Assessments and have an enhanced cleaning schedule in place. If parents/carers or students have any questions, please contact the School on enquiries@spaldinghigh.lincs.sch.uk, or if it is specific to our testing arrangements, to covid.testing@spaldinghigh.lincs.sch.uk.

Yours sincerely



M K Anderson
Headmistress