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Headteacher: Brett Jouney

BJ/rem
10 January 2022

Dear Parents and Carers

COVID Update January 2022

It has been brilliant to have all students and staff back in school this term, seeing the students engaged in lessons has been really positive and staff are raring to go after a lovely Christmas break.

We start the term wearing face coverings at all times inside the building, including classrooms and we continue to keep classrooms well ventilated. With the colder weather here, we are working hard to find the right balance between ventilation and comfort. Students are able to wear their coats in classrooms if the teacher feels it is warranted. This has been really well managed so far, and we will continue to review our practices.

The term started in a familiar way with on-site testing taking place in the school gym. This is a huge operation and with the support of the staff testing team and our amazing parent helpers we were able to test all students wishing to be tested in just over two days. I was thrilled that 89% of our students had consent to be tested and from the 1266 tests conducted, we identified only 2 cases of COVID-19. Those two students were isolated and will now do their isolation at home.

Cases in our school community remain very low and we will continue with all our control measures to ensure that transmission and the impact on the young people's learning remains low.

You would have received a communication from the Wiltshire Vaccination Team on Friday, explaining that at present we are due to offer students their second dose of the vaccine later in January. You are also able to book the second vaccine through the NHS and get this sooner if you so wish. As with last time, all consents and issues around consent will be dealt with by Virgin Health.

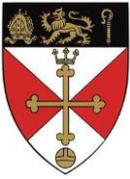
We have recently had some further clarification from the Department for Education about the change to isolation periods for those who have contracted COVID-19. The answers to two key questions is below:

What is the position of individuals without symptoms returning after 10 days if their lateral flow is still positive?

- They may return to their education setting and should not take any more LFD tests after the 10th day of their isolation period even if they have a positive LFD test result.



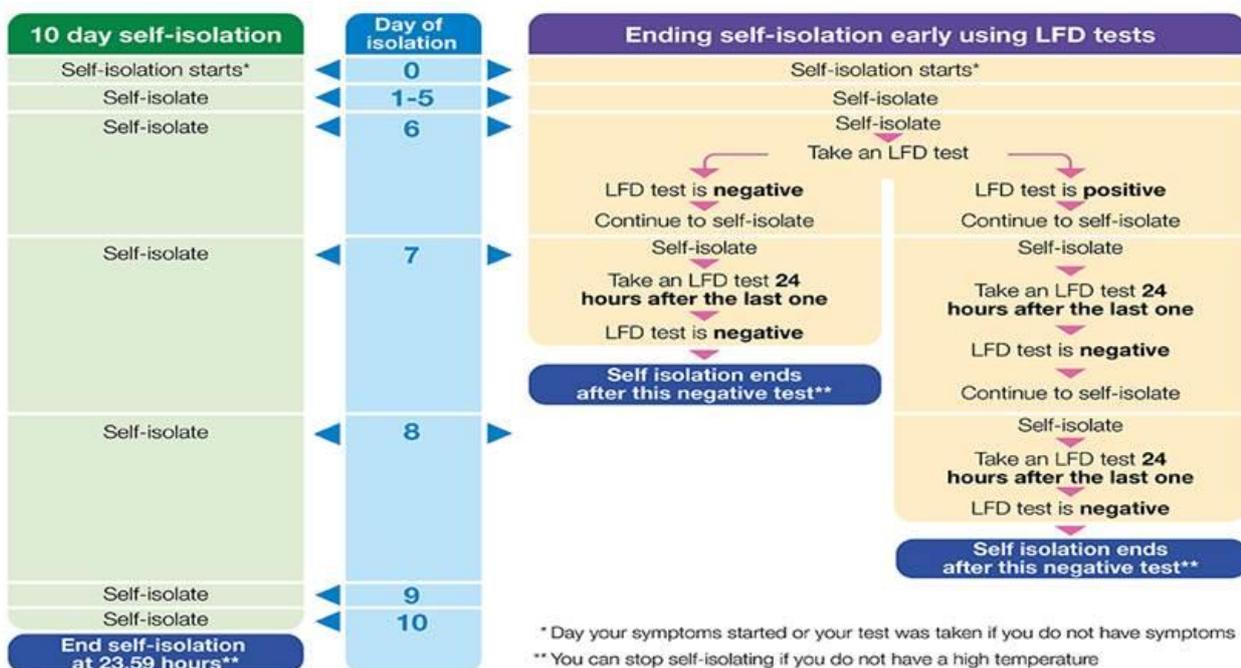
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- This is because they are unlikely to be infectious after the 10th day of their isolation period. If they still have a high temperature after 10 days or are otherwise unwell, they should stay at home and seek medical advice.
- Please follow the [Stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-or-confirmed-coronavirus-covid-19-infection)

Can you clarify when staff and pupils can return after negative LFD tests?

- Staff and pupils can take a LFD test from 6 days after the day their symptoms started (or the day the test was taken if they did not have symptoms), and another LFD test on the following day. The second LFD test should be taken at least 24 hours later. If both these test results are negative, and they do not have a high temperature, they may end self-isolation immediately after the second negative test result.
- They should stop testing after they have had 2 consecutive negative test results and can return to their education setting on the 7th day if they have tested negative in the morning.



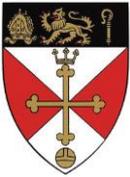
Changes to PCR test requirements for people who receive a positive lateral flow test

The UK Health Security Agency has confirmed that from Tuesday, 11 January, people who receive a positive lateral flow test result and are symptom-free will no longer be required to take a follow up PCR test to begin their isolation period.

Under the new guidance, people who test positive on lateral flows will still need to isolate for at least 7 days and will need to register their positive lateral flow results; but will no longer take a PCR test.

People experiencing the three official COVID symptoms - a high temperature, new, continuous cough and a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste - will still need to get a PCR test.





At the moment, people without symptoms who test positive on a lateral flow test are asked to order a PCR test and to only begin their isolation period when they get the second result. This effectively requires them to isolate for longer than seven days, especially if there are delays in getting the PCR result. These new temporary changes are being brought in whilst case rates are so high. More information can be found at Confirmatory PCR tests to be temporarily suspended for positive lateral flow test results - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk).

We have a small number of lateral flow tests available for students and staff in school, more have been ordered and are due to be delivered next week.

We will continue to review the situation around COVID-19 cases in school and keep parents up to date with our measures. We will also continue monitoring the numbers of cases in the school community closely and spot any clusters of transmission and act accordingly.

I must once again take this opportunity to thank parents and carers for their full support during this time and commend the students for their seamless compliance with the ever-changing situation.

Yours sincerely

Brett Jouny
Headteacher

