



14<sup>th</sup> July 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

I write to share with you arrangements for the end of term and the start of the new school year following recent guidance issued to schools by the Department for Education last week.

### End of Term Arrangements

New [guidance](#) was given to schools on 6<sup>th</sup> July which outlines recommendations and statutory obligations as the country moves to Step 4 of the Government's roadmap. The Government has provided detailed information for parents and carers which can be found [here](#).

St Nicholas will be operating the following arrangements until the end of the term:

- Students with symptoms of Covid-19 must not attend school and should arrange for a PCR test as soon as possible.
- The timings of the school day will continue as per current 2020-21 arrangements.
- From Monday 19<sup>th</sup> July, school will no longer undertake its own contact tracing of close contacts. Instead, children will be contacted by NHS Test and Trace, informed they have been in close contact with a positive case and advised to take a PCR test. We would encourage all individuals to take a PCR test if advised to do so.
- Children under the age of 18 years old will still be required to self isolate up to 16<sup>th</sup> August. From this date, they will no longer be required to self-isolate if they are contacted by NHS Test and Trace as a close contact of a positive COVID-19 case.

The guidance also states that face coverings no longer need to be worn from Monday 19<sup>th</sup> July, however the *"director of public health might advise you that face coverings should temporarily be worn in communal areas or classrooms"*.

I can confirm that the Director of Public Health for Cheshire West and Chester has advised that **face coverings should continue to be worn in communal areas including classrooms and on school transport until the end of term.**



## Arrangements for September

The school will open for students in Years 7 and 12 at 8.20am on Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> September.

The school will open for all students on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> September.

### The School Day

- The school day will return to 'normal' 2019 timings with students expected to be on site no later than 8.45am and lesson 5 finishing at 3.15pm. There will be no staggered departures for students.
- The school gates will open to students from 8.20am for them to access the yard and the dining room prior to form time commencing at 8.45am.
- There will no longer be a requirement for 'split' breaks and lunchtimes and all students will be able to access the dining room between 11.15 - 11.35am and 12.35 – 1.15pm.
- We will be re-establishing our comprehensive enrichment and co-curricular opportunities for all students at lunchtimes and after school.
- Homework club will be available to any student that wishes to attend from 3.15-4.15pm.

### On-site testing

- The Government has asked all schools to facilitate on site testing for secondary school students when they return to school in September. Students will therefore receive 2 on-site lateral flow device tests, 3 to 5 days apart, on their return in the Advent term. For Years 7 and 12, their first test will be undertaken on Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> September and for all other year groups from Monday 6<sup>th</sup> September onwards.
- Following our on-site testing arrangements in March, we have retained all consent documentation for students and will use these details to organise our on-site testing schedule for September. If you wish to change consent previously given to the school then please email [covidtesting@st-nicholas.cheshire.sch.uk](mailto:covidtesting@st-nicholas.cheshire.sch.uk)

### Face coverings

- From September, face coverings will no longer be advised for students, staff and visitors in classrooms, communal areas or on school transport.
- If however, students wish to wear a face covering then that will be perfectly acceptable. Face coverings should be plain with no logos.



### Students with Covid-19 Symptoms

- Students with symptoms of Covid-19 must still not attend school and should arrange for a PCR test as soon as possible.
- Should a student begin to display symptoms in school then they will need to be collected as soon as possible.
- If a parent or carer insists on a student with symptoms attending school, we can take the decision to refuse the student if, in our reasonable judgement, it is necessary to protect other students and staff from possible infection with COVID-19. Our decision would be carefully considered in light of all the circumstances and current public health advice.

### Positive Cases

Anyone with a positive test result will need to:

- self-isolate in line with the [stay at home guidance](#) (if they test positive at school, you will need to collect your child as soon as possible)
- [book a further test](#) (a lab-based polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test) to confirm the result, whether the test was done at home, school or college
- Whilst awaiting the PCR result, the individual should continue to self-isolate.

If the PCR test is taken within the 2 days following the positive LFD result, and is negative, it overrides the self-test LFD test and your child can return to school as long as they don't have COVID-19 symptoms.

### Contacts of a positive case

- From 16 August 2021, children under the age of 18 years old will no longer be required to self-isolate if they are contacted by NHS Test and Trace as a close contact of a positive COVID-19 case.

### Control Measures

St Nicholas will continue to:

- Ensure good hygiene for everyone through the promotion of Respiratory and hand hygiene. Hand sanitiser stations will continue to be in place around the school site and in each classroom. Students will still be expected to sanitise their hands when they arrive on school site and on entry and exit to each classroom.
- Maintain appropriate cleaning regimes with regular cleaning of frequently touched surfaces in operation throughout the school day.
- Keep occupied spaces well ventilated by opening external windows to improve natural ventilation, and in addition, opening internal and external doors to assist with creating a throughput of air as appropriate.



All measures in place for the start of the new school year will be included in our updated Risk Assessment which will, as always, be available on our school website for your information. Should there be any further guidance issued to schools over the summer holidays then I will write to update you as soon as practically possible.

### **School uniform**

Students have been reminded of uniform standards during assemblies this week and I would ask you to re-familiarise yourself with our [Uniform Policy](#) and other detailed information on our school website as you embark upon your summer purchases in preparation for September. Please pay particular attention to footwear and permitted hair styles which are clearly outlined in our Uniform Policy to avoid any misunderstanding when your child returns in September.

In closing, I would like to thank you for the continued support you have offered to our community throughout this challenging and, at times, turbulent school year. As I write this letter many students are having to self isolate at home, some for the second or third time – we do not underestimate the significance of this, particularly at the end of the school year.

Your children have been exceptional – they have demonstrated creativity and determination alongside humility and genuine care for each other. As a school community, we recognise that everything our students have had to endure this year will have impacted each and every one of them in many different ways, which is why our commitment to student wellbeing and mental health will continue as an absolute priority next year. We will write to you in September with further details of how we intend to support your children throughout the new academic year.

In response to the global pandemic, Pope Francis has recently reminded us that *“If we act as one people, we can make a real impact. May we find within us the necessary antibodies of justice, charity and solidarity. We must not be afraid to live the alternative – the civilization of love.”*

On behalf of the governors and all the staff here at St Nicholas, I wish you all a restful, relaxing and ‘love filled’ summer holiday amongst the company of family and friends.

Yours sincerely

**Richard Woods**  
Headteacher