



29th November 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

I write to you in response to updated guidance all schools have received today from the Department for Education regarding Covid-19 and mitigations that schools are now being asked to implement.

Face coverings

From tomorrow, 30th November, face coverings should be worn in communal areas in school by staff, visitors and students, unless they are exempt. Parents and carers who have already informed the school of their child's exemption status are not required to do so again. Students should continue to wear face coverings on public and dedicated school transport, unless they are exempt.

Guidance on the wearing of face coverings is included as an appendix to this letter and students may choose to continue to wear their face coverings during lessons should they wish to do so.

Testing

We are continuing to encourage staff and students to test twice weekly using lateral flow device (LFD) tests and further test kits have been recently distributed. We will distribute further home test kits once they have been delivered to school.

The Government has also requested that secondary schools prepare to test their students once on-site on their return in January to help reduce transmission after a period of social mixing over the school holidays. We will provide further details and scheduling arrangements before the Christmas break.

Contact tracing and isolation

Close contacts in schools are now identified by NHS Test and Trace and education settings are not expected to undertake contact tracing.

As with positive cases in any other setting, NHS Test and Trace will work with the positive case and/or their parent to identify close contacts. Contacts from a school setting will only be traced by NHS Test and Trace where the positive case and/or their parent specifically identifies the individual as being a close contact. This is likely to be a small number of individuals who would be most at risk of contracting COVID-19 due to the nature of the close contact.

All individuals who have been identified as a close contact of a suspected or confirmed case of the Omicron variant of COVID-19, irrespective of vaccination status and age, will be contacted directly and required to self-isolate immediately and asked to book a PCR test. They will be informed by the local health protection team or NHS Test and Trace if they fall into this category and provided details about self-isolation.



Individuals are not required to self-isolate if they live in the same household as someone with COVID-19 who is **not** a suspected or confirmed case of the Omicron variant, or are a close contact of someone with COVID-19 who is **not** a suspected or confirmed case of the Omicron variant, and any of the following apply:

- they are fully vaccinated
- they are below the age of 18 years and 6 months
- they have taken part in or are currently part of an approved COVID-19 vaccine trial
- they are not able to get vaccinated for medical reasons

Instead, they 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 and young people aged under 18 years 6 months who usually attend school, and have been identified as a close contact of someone with COVID-19 who is **not** a suspected or confirmed case of the Omicron variant, should continue to attend school as normal. They should continue to follow recent guidance issued by the local health protection team which we shared with parents on [5th November](#).

Vaccinations

The Government are encouraging all eligible staff and students aged 12 and above to take up the offer of the vaccine, including boosters. Further information can be found [here](#).

School Meals

We will continue to provide free school meal support to any students who are eligible for benefits-related free school meals and who are learning at home due to self-isolation. Please contact the school finance office should you wish to discuss this matter further.

Remote Learning

Should your child need to remain at home to self-isolate, remote education will be provided for them if they are well enough to engage with this provision. The school office will discuss this matter with you if you inform us that your child is having to self-isolate.

School events

The Year 9 Options Evening taking place on Thursday this week and the additional Sixth Form Information Evening for Year 11 families next week will both continue as planned. Face coverings will need to be worn on site unless exempt.

We are currently in discussions with the local health protection team regarding additional planned school events over the coming weeks - we will provide further guidance and information once this has been received.



ST NICHOLAS CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

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In addition to the above, we will continue to ensure that the following ongoing control measures remain in place at St Nicholas:

- Good hand hygiene for all staff and students throughout the day
- Maintaining enhanced cleaning regimes throughout the day
- Keeping occupied spaces well ventilated while maintaining a comfortable temperature

Thank you for your ongoing support as together we continue to do all we can to keep our community as safe as possible.

Yours sincerely

Richard Woods
Headteacher





Face covering Guidance

Circumstances where people are not able to wear face coverings:

There are some circumstances where people may not be able to wear a face covering. Please be mindful and respectful of such circumstances. Some people are less able to wear face coverings, and the reasons for this may not be visible to others. In relation to education settings, this includes (but is not limited to):

- people who cannot put on, wear or remove a face covering because of a physical or mental illness or impairment, or disability
- people for whom putting on, wearing or removing a face covering will cause severe distress
- people speaking to or providing assistance to someone who relies on lip reading, clear sound or facial expressions to communicate
- to avoid the risk of harm or injury to yourself or others
- you are also permitted to remove a face covering in order to take medication

Safe wearing and removal of face coverings

When wearing a face covering, staff, visitors and students should:

- wash their hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser before putting a face covering on
- avoid touching the part of the face covering in contact with the mouth and nose, as it could be contaminated with the virus
- change the face covering if it becomes damp or if they've touched the part of the face covering in contact with the mouth and nose
- avoid taking it off and putting it back on a lot in quick succession to minimise potential contamination

When removing a face covering, staff, visitors and students should:

- wash their hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser before removing
- only handle the straps, ties or clips
- not give it to someone else to use
- if single-use, dispose of it carefully in a household waste bin and do not recycle
- once removed, store reusable face coverings in a plastic bag until there is an opportunity to wash them.
- if reusable, wash it in line with manufacturer's instructions at the highest temperature appropriate for the fabric



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- wash their hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser once removed

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