

CWA/MBE

2 January 2022

Dear Parents and Carers

Re: An Important COVID-19 Update

First of all, may I take this opportunity to wish all of our families a very Happy New Year after what I hope has been a pleasant festive period.

After receiving the expected Department for Education (DfE) latest guidance update this morning, having worked through and digested what was a somewhat lengthy document, I will now clarify what the key changes will be from a Plume Academy perspective:

A shortening of the *self-isolation period - Since Wednesday 22 December 2021, the 10 day self-isolation period for people who return a positive PCR test result for COVID-19 has been reduced to 7 days in most circumstances, unless a person cannot test for any reason. In this morning's updated guidance, it was confirmed that this also now applies to school settings.

Therefore, individuals who are self-isolating with COVID-19 may now take LFD tests from 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. **If both of these test results are negative, and the person does not have a high temperature or fever, they may end their self-isolation straight after the second negative test result and return to their education setting from day 8.**

Even if a positive test is returned on day 6 or 7 of their self-isolation period, LFD tests can still be taken on days 8 and 9 and if 2 consecutive negative tests taken 24 hours apart are returned and again, a person does not have a high temperature or fever, they can end their period of self-isolation and return to the academy the following day.

**The self-isolation period includes the day the symptoms started, or the day their PCR test was taken if they do not have symptoms, and for the next 10 full days. However, anyone who is unable to take LFD tests will need to complete the full 10 day period of self-isolation.*

Daily testing for close contacts of a confirmed COVID-19 case - 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 7 days and continue to attend their setting as normal, unless they return a positive test result or develop symptoms at any time.

In the current climate, I strongly advise any Plume Academy stakeholder to take a daily LFD test for 7 days if somebody else in their household is confirmed as having COVID-19.

Updated guidance on the use of face coverings in education settings - From today, Sunday 2 January 2022, the DfE has stated that face coverings should also be worn in classrooms where students in Year 7 and above are educated –

this is in addition to them being worn whilst travelling between lessons, lining up in any break and lunch canteen queue, and whilst travelling to and from the academy on buses and in taxis.

The DfE have said this is short term only, to support students and staff as they return to school this term, and will be in place until the current Plan B regulations are reviewed on Wednesday 26 January 2022.

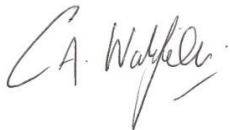
Testing prior to returning after the Christmas break – Further to my letters on this matter at the end of last term, other than those who have booked in to test in the sports area of our Fambridge Road Campus between 2-3pm on Tuesday 4 January 2022, I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate my request for your support in ensuring your child/children test on the afternoon or evening prior to their return from the Christmas break.

Should a positive LFD test be returned – and I genuinely hope this proves not to be the case – a PCR test would then need booking and your child would need to self-isolate until you were informed of the PCR's outcome. As you have done superbly well thus far, informing the academy via your child's Assistant Head of Year, or our Attendance Team, as soon as possible upon the return of a positive LFD test, would also be greatly appreciated.

All of our established COVID-19 mitigations will remain in place moving forward but will continue to remain under constant review.

Thank you for taking the time to read this further COVID-19 update letter, as well as in advance of your anticipated vitally important ongoing support. This very much includes keeping those channels of communication open and strong as by doing so, our collaborative efforts will without doubt further assist us in endeavouring to keep COVID-19 at bay across both campuses as we progress into the Spring term.

Yours sincerely



Mr C A Wakefield
Executive Principal