



Principal: Dr Katharine Vincent

Friday 10th December 2021

Dear parents and carers,

Thank you for all your ongoing support for the school. Please find below some information and updates, including details of the end of term and return to school in January 2022.

Covid-19 situation and additional testing

As you know, we have re-introduced face-masks in communal areas. We have also undertaken a full review of the school's Covid-19 risk assessment to ensure we are maintaining a safe environment.

I would like to strongly encourage all students to continue with their twice-weekly lateral flow tests. It is important that you do these tests on a regular basis and report the result: <https://www.gov.uk/report-covid19-result>. Students will be given additional test kits to take home before the holidays, to ensure they have access to these tests on a regular basis during the break.

The government has also asked schools to offer rapid testing to students when they return after the Christmas holidays. We hope all students will take up this opportunity to help prevent the spread of infection after the holidays. A letter will be sent home to students about this before Christmas, asking parents to consent to this additional testing and giving details of the testing arrangements.

Year 11 and Year 13 parents evening – Thursday 9th December

Thank you to everyone who attended parents evening. It was lovely to see so many of you in person and to talk with you about students' progress and achievement. I know that teachers found it extremely useful to be able to speak to parents how best to support students during this time, as they work towards their final examinations. If you were not able to attend, your child's report will be sent through the post to you. Please also contact your child's Head of House arrange an alternative time to meet with you.

Christmas lunch – Thursday 16th December

A Christmas lunch will be available for students on Thursday 16th December. I hope that all students will join us for lunch on that day, as a way of marking the festive season together.

End of the autumn term – Friday 17th December

The last day of the autumn term for students will be Friday 17th December 2021. On this day, students will finish lessons at 12.40pm, at the end of Period 4. Packed lunches will be given to any students who are eligible for free school meals on this day.



Start of term in January 2022

- Monday 3rd January 2022 – School closed – bank holiday
- Tuesday 4th January 2022 – School closed to students - INSET day for teachers
- Wednesday 5th January 2022 – All students return to school at normal time of 8.40am

Trips and visits

Students have been taking part in a large number of exciting trips and visits. This includes end of year trips for students to the Natural History Museum and the Science Museum, and to ice skating.

Year 10 students continue to take part in trips and visits as part of the trust-wide Inspirational Societies. We are delighted to be able to offer students in Year 10 the opportunity to take part in a residential trip to Athens, Greece, in the summer term. This will include students from across Mulberry Schools Trust and will be a fantastic opportunity for students. A letter will be sent home about this before the Christmas holidays; please contact Ms Taylor if you have any questions.

Open Evening – Thursday 20th January

The second Open Evening of the year will take place on Thursday 20th January. Please encourage current Year 11 students to attend and please share the date with any friends or family who you know are interested in joining the school next year.

COVID-19 Control Measures

Lateral flow testing

In light of current concern about the Omnicron variant, I would like to strongly encourage all students and staff to undertake twice-weekly lateral flow testing. Additional test kits have been given out to all members of staff and students this week, with guidance about how to undertake tests and how to report results. It is extremely important that tests are reported via the government website: <https://www.gov.uk/report-covid19-result>. Any positive test results must also be reported immediately to the school using the email address info@mulberryutc.org.

Dealing with possible or confirmed cases of COVID 19

Students and staff should not come into school if they have symptoms of COVID 19 or if they have had a positive test result. Anyone who has symptoms is advised to take a PCR test and to self-isolate until they



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have the results. If the result is negative, they can return to school when they feel well enough. If the result is positive, they will need to self-isolate for 10 days, following the government guidelines.

If anyone develops COVID-19 symptoms while in school, they will be sent home immediately, recommended to take a PCR test and to self-isolate until they receive the results. Students do not need to self-isolate if they live in the same household as someone with COVID-19, or if they are a close contact of someone with COVID-19, unless they have been identified as a close contact of someone with the Omnicron variant. Instead, they will be contacted by NHS Test and Trace and advised to take a PCR test. We would strongly encourage all students to take a PCR test if advised to do so.

Contact tracing

Schools are no longer required to carry out contact tracing. In the event of a confirmed case at school, NHS Track and Trace will work with the staff member, student and/or parent/carer to identify close contacts.

Individuals are not required to self-isolate if they are a close contact of a positive COVID case, or if they live in a household with a COVID case, providing one of the following:

- They are under 18, or over 18 and fully vaccinated
- They are in an approved COVID 19 trial
- They are not able to vaccinate for medical reasons
- They have not been informed that they are a close contact of someone who has contracted the new Omnicron variant

If not required to self-isolate, an individual who is a close contact of a confirmed case will be advised to take a PCR test, but should continue to attend school in the meantime. If the result is negative, they should continue to attend school; if the result is positive, they should immediately self-isolate and notify the school.

Thank you for all your ongoing support for the school, which is very much appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

Dr K Vincent

Principal