

Date: Sunday 2nd January 2022

Dear parents / carers,

Re: updated Government guidance on the use of face coverings in education settings

I trust you have had a restful Christmas break and have had an opportunity to celebrate the New Year with your family.

I understand and fully appreciate that many of you are worried about the Omicron variant and the difficulties this could bring when schools re-open this week. I want to reassure you that keeping everybody safe is of the up most importance for me. Equally important is that the academy remains open for all year groups so that all students receive face-to-face education. We all want the best for our children and know that face-to-face education is the best way for our children to learn, as is continued social interactions with friends and staff. Year 11 have some examinations and assessments taking place early in the new year and these will go ahead for our students who have worked so hard to prepare for them.

This morning the Government announced additional guidance on the use of face coverings in education settings. Face coverings are now also to be worn in Year 7 to Year 11 classrooms in schools. This guidance is short term only, to support students and teachers as they return to school this term and will be in place until Wednesday 26th January, when national Plan B regulations are currently scheduled to expire, at which point it will be reviewed by the Government.

If government National Health Service staff absence figures, due to Omicron, translate into school staff absence figures across the Spring Term, then I am forecasting a very similar potential 25% of academy staff will be absent due to Omicron. This is a worst-case scenario and would be an extremely challenging situation for any school to continue to provide a level of educational provision at full staff attendance. Therefore, I warmly welcome today's Government announcement on face coverings in classrooms. I would have mandated it as an additional proportional measure in any case, to further protect our community by introducing another measure to reduce the risk of infection transfer to both students and staff (and families), with the sole intention on keeping our academy open for all year groups.

Ormiston Park Academy COVID19 secure measures in place from Wednesday 5th January:

1. windows open - in classrooms and offices to increase ventilation (site management will increase the inside heating temperature)
2. doors open - in classrooms and offices where possible to increase ventilation
3. hand gel - all students and staff to apply hand gel on entry to classrooms
4. antibac wipes – available in all classrooms and offices to wipe desks on exit
5. face covering – to be worn by all students and staff in classrooms (unless medically exempt certificate provided to academy)

6. face covering – to be worn by all students and staff in corridors (unless medically exempt certificate provided to academy)
7. face covering – to be worn by all students and staff in other indoor communal spaces except while eating in the Heart Space (unless medically exempt certificate provided to academy)
8. enhanced specialist COVID19 cleaning regimen – has remained in place since Sept 2020
9. LFD Home Testing – all students and staff to continue to LFD test twice a week at home every Sunday and Wednesday and report any positive test results to the academy attendance team and to all test results to [NHS Test and Trace](#). We will distribute LFD home test kits to students and staff this week
10. LFD testing for consenting students on return to school – on Wednesday 5th Jan and Mon 10th Jan

Self-Isolation

Please note that since Wednesday 22nd December, the 10 day self-isolation period for people who record a positive PCR test result for COVID-19 has been reduced to 7 days. Individuals may now take LFD tests on day 6 and day 7 of their self-isolation period. Those who receive two negative test results are no longer required to complete the 10 full days of self-isolation. The first test must be taken on day 6 of the self-isolation and the second test must be taken on day 7 of the self-isolation period. If both these test results are negative, and you do not have a high temperature, you may end your self-isolation after the second negative test result and return to your education setting on day 8. Please could you keep the academy Attendance Team up to date with positive LFD home tests results and positive and negative PCR test results so staff can be informed of self-isolation in order to provide remote education for students via MS Teams and [Oak National Academy](#).

Daily LFD testing for close contacts of COVID19 PCR positive

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 seven days and continue to attend their setting as normal, unless they have a positive test result or develop symptoms at any time.

I am very proud of the students and staff and how they have been resilient, flexible and in many cases proactive in adapting to the pandemic. We strive for excellence at Ormiston Park Academy and have continued to improve and develop in all aspects of the academy and I am steadfast that will continue to do so, despite the pandemic. I do believe that this term will be challenging for us all, but please have no doubt that my staff and I will work exceptionally hard to keep your child as safe as we can while providing quality education provision.

We look forward to seeing all year groups back in the academy on Wednesday 5th January.

I thank you for your continued support.

Kind regards



Mark Roessler
Principal
Ormiston Park Academy