

TLA / GPA

28th December 2021

Dear Parent/Carer,

I should like to begin by wishing all members of our school community an enjoyable Christmas break and hoping that all our students have a chance to rest and recharge after such an extraordinary year. It is a pity that the year is ending very much as it began, with infections soaring and considerable uncertainty about the path that the pandemic may take over the coming months, but we will continue to plan for the return of students in January in line with guidance as it stands. If the situation changes, we will, of course, endeavour to inform you as swiftly as possible.

Covid Testing and Start of Spring Term

The Government has again advised secondary schools to conduct on-site lateral flow tests for all students at the start of term. It is more crucial than ever, with the new variant circulating, that we pick up any potential infections before students begin mixing again in the school buildings. We understand that Omicron is significantly more transmissible than previous forms of the virus so protective measures such as this are extremely important to keep our community safe.

We will therefore be requesting that **students in all year groups undertake a lateral flow test at home, 3-5 days before returning to school, and will then take one further test in our on-site testing facility, as per the schedule below. This means that students need to take the first of these tests between 31st December and 2nd January.**

Testing around 1000 young people is a huge operation and so schools have again been permitted by the Government to stagger the start of term for different year groups in order to allow this to happen. We have therefore planned the following schedule to accommodate this.

On **Tuesday 4th January**, the school is open for staff only as it is an INSET Day and students will not have normal lessons. However, this provides us with an opportunity to conduct lateral flow tests with a significant number of students. It is therefore our intention to **test all students in Years 7, 10 and 11 on that day**. Students should come to the school site at the time specified for their tutor group in the table below. They will be directed to enter via the rear door of the gym, as was the case for the tests in September. The test should only take a few minutes to complete, and they will then be free to return home again. Students do not need to wear uniform. Times for individual groups are:

Tuesday 4th January		Tuesday 4th January		Tuesday 4th January	
Year 7		Year 10		Year 11	
Time	Tutor Group	Time	Tutor Group	Time	Tutor Group
08:45 am	7H	11:00 am	10H	1:30pm	11H
09:00 am	7U	11:15 am	10U	1:45pm	11U
09:15 am	7N	11:30 am	10N	2:00pm	11N
09:30 am	7T	11:45 am	10T	2:15pm	11T
09:45 am	7E	12:00 pm	10E	2:30pm	11E
10:00 am	7R	12:15 pm	10R	2:45pm	11R
10:15 am	7A	12:30 pm	10A		
10:30 am	7L				

On **Wednesday 5th January**, students in **Years 7, 10 and 11** will come to school at the normal time and will have lessons as on a standard school day – please note that it is a Week B. **Students in Years 8 and 9 will not be in school** but will be set remote learning to complete at home on Microsoft Teams, by the teachers whose lessons they would ordinarily be attending on that day. The work set should be scheduled **to appear at the time each lesson would start in the normal timetable**. Please note that there will be no 'live' lessons, due to the fact that students in these year groups will also be required to come into school at a certain point in the day, as per the schedule below, to complete their on-site lateral flow test. They will be directed to enter via the rear door of the gym, as was the case for the tests in September. The test should only take a few minutes to complete, and they will then be free to return home again. Students do not need to wear uniform. Times for individual groups are:

Wednesday 5th January		Wednesday 5th January	
Year 8		Year 9	
Time	Tutor Group	Time	Tutor Group
08:45 am	8H	11:40 am	9H
09:05 am	8U	12:00 pm	9U
09:25 am	8N	12:20 pm	9N
09:45 am	8T	12:40 pm	9T
10:05 am	8E	1:00pm	Lunch
10:25 am	8R	1:40 pm	9E
10:45 am	Break	2:00 pm	9R
11:00 am	8A	2:20 pm	9A
11:20 am	8L		

Please note that students must not eat or drink for the 30 minutes prior to taking the lateral flow test. We have previously requested consent from parents of students in all year groups and this still stands but if you wish to change your consent, please let us know. No child will be pressured into taking a test, this is a matter of personal choice, however, these measures are promoted as being a way of reducing the high risk of transmission of the virus as we all return to the school buildings together, and we appreciate your support to keep our teachers, support staff and students safe.

From **Thursday 6th January onwards**, all students will be in school as normal and following a regular timetable.

Covid Measures

It remains difficult to predict the course that the virus will take over coming months, or the steps that schools will be required to take to control it. At this point, we are planning for term to begin with existing measures still in place, namely:

- Staff and students are required to wear face coverings in corridors and internal communal areas, but not in classrooms
- General good hygiene to be promoted – hand sanitiser will continue to be available in all classrooms and enhanced cleaning regimes will be maintained
- Ventilation in all spaces remains a priority
- Anyone showing symptoms of coronavirus should stay at home and schools have the right to send home anyone with identified symptoms
- Anyone testing positive via a lateral flow or PCR test should stay at home

ALEC HUNTER ACADEMY Stubbs Lane, Braintree, Essex CM7 3NR.
t: 01376 321813 e: admin@alechunter.com w: www.alechunter.com

If the guidance changes before the 4th January, we will inform you of any adjustments that we are required to make. I do hope that I will not need to trouble you any further over the coming days and should like to wish you a safe and restful Christmas. However, if you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us and I trust that you will enjoy the remainder of the holidays.

Yours sincerely,



Mr T. Lawn
Headteacher