**Parent/Carer Update 10 January 2022** 

Dear Parent/ Carer

I hope that you and your family members have had a relaxing Christmas break and a happy New Year.

Although I did write to you just before the Christmas break (See parent update - 22 December 2021), I would like to remind you again of our key changes as we start this term and update you on a number of issues relating to the latest Scottish Government advice for schools (as at 7 January 2022 ). I do apologise for the length of the communication but it does contain useful information on LFD testing and self-isolation – key changes introduced late last week by the Scottish Government and you will be able to refer to this information over coming weeks if you have any issues. There will also be a copy on our school website and it will be shared with all young people on year level Google classroom sites.

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**Food Catering at School**

We were informed late on 22 December 2021, just after we sent out our end of term parental update that all Midlothian Schools would, until further notice, have to temporarily stop serving food at lunchtimes due to staffing issues. This was communicated before the break by the Local Authority but we are aware that this may have been missed.

**Please Note – as from Tuesday 11 January 2022** and until further notice all S1 and any other students (S2-S6) wanting to eat lunch in school will need to provide their own lunch. All students should also bring water to school and have a refillable water bottle.

S1 students, as per our normal procedures will not be permitted to leave the grounds at lunchtime unless they have permission to go home for lunch through written application from parent / carers.

Parents in receipt of a free school meal allowance should note the following link and information below.

[Free school meals and clothing grants update | Free school meals and clothing grants | Midlothian Council](https://www.midlothian.gov.uk/info/855/school_meals/117/free_school_meals_and_clothing_grants/3)

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Payment** | **Paid to Bank Accounts** | **Notes/Comments** |
| 4 Weekly Payment | Tuesday 11th January | P6 – S6 Tuesday 11th January to Friday 5th February 2022£39.90 per Primary pupil£43.70 per Secondary pupil |

**Omicron Variant - Contingency Planning**

As we prepare for what we suspect could be a challenging period on return to school, we want to remind you again of our current contingency and safety plans. In January 2022, we will see the following being re-introduced:

* Return to staggered school day and separate break/lunch areas
* Restrictions for all school visitors
* Drama/PE/Music/Dance restrictions. (but not to include pupils studying for National Qualifications)

Whilst continuing the following:

* Ventilation (CO2 monitoring in place)
* Mask wearing by all except those with exemptions
* Hand sanitation and desk cleaning
* High touch area – regular cleaning around the school
* One way system
* Self-isolation
* Asymptomatic testing – new nasal swab kits now available.

**Asymptomatic Testing**

We are asking that **all staff and students returning to school on Tuesday 11 January complete a LFD test** and record the result, positive or negative on the official website below.

[Report your coronavirus (COVID-19) test result | NHS inform](https://www.nhsinform.scot/campaigns/coronavirus-covid-19-report-your-test-result)

The new nasal swab kits are more user friendly and will be freely available at school form the start of term. Use of these LFD tests will be particularly important to support the most recent updates to self-isolation guidance, which involve greater use of LFD test kits for positive cases and close contacts.

The test should be carried out twice a week – Monday and Wednesday morning before coming to school to ensure we avoid asymptomatic spread and protect the school community.

**New Self Isolation Advice**

***Self-isolation policy (including contact tracing and testing) - updated approach to high-risk contacts (from 6 Jan 2022)***

Based on the latest clinical evidence, revised self-isolation measures will apply to anyone who receives a positive test result or is asked to isolate as a close contact of any SARS-CoV-2 (Covid-19) strain from Thursday 6 January 2022.

Anyone who was asked to self-isolate or who received a positive test before this time should follow the guidance they received at the Full guidance on updated self-isolation measures can be found on NHS Inform.

The revised requirements are, in summary:

**Positive Cases (regardless of vaccination status)**

● Must isolate for 10 days. However, if the person tests negative on day 6 and day 7 LFD tests (taken at least 24 hours apart, with the first test no earlier than day 6) they may leave isolation if they have no fever after their day 7 test.

**Fully Vaccinated Adult Contacts (NB: definition of “fully vaccinated adult” is now 3 doses of an MHRA-approved vaccine) AND all contacts who are aged under 18 years and 4 months**

● Must take daily LFD tests over 7 days and report negative results each day, instead of isolating –there is no requirement for a PCR test to be released from self-isolation.

● Children aged under 5 who are close contacts do not need to self-isolate or take daily LFD tests, but are recommended to take a one-off LFD test before ending isolation.

● If you’re a close contact who can end self-isolation, you can help protect others by following our guidance on how to stay safe and help prevent the spread. **Unvaccinated/Partially Vaccinated Adult Contacts (NB: this includes adults with only 0-2 doses)**

● You must take a PCR test and isolate for 10 days.

Fully vaccinated individuals who have tested positive for SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) within 90 days should still participate in appropriate daily LFD testing in line with NHS guidance when they are identified as contacts. Individuals who have tested positive within 90 days should also continue to participate in routine asymptomatic LFD testing, including testing in schools.

If anyone aged 5 or over is identified as a contact but has been advised by a medical professional that they are unable to undertake LFD tests for a medical reason, or are unable to take LFD tests due to disability, this should be discussed with Test and Protect when they contact them.

**N.B. If a pupil attends the school with symptoms of cough and/ or high temperature, they will be sent home immediately**.  If they need to wait to be collected by their parent or carer, they will be isolated in a private, well ventilated room/area. Isolation rooms will be cleaned after use in keeping with National Guidance.

School staff will be vigilant to any potential signs of Covid-19 and we will always err on the side of caution in contacting parents and carers.

**REMINDER - Omicron Variant - Changes to the school day**

**To keep students and staff safe we have made some adjustments to the school day, including the re-introduction of staggered start and break times**. These measures were previously in place so will be familiar to our students. The changes are detailed below. These help provide larger spaces for students during key times and also support maintaining year group bubbles, which the new government guidance demands.

**Staggered Timetable and Break/Lunch Venues:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Monday – Thursday****S1-3** | **Monday – Thursday****S4-6** |
| Registration | 8.30 – 8.40 am | Registration | None |   |
| Period 1 | 8.40 – 9.30 am | Period 1 | 8.40 – 9.30 am |   |
| Period 2 | 9.30 – 10.20 am | Period 2 | 9.30 – 10.20 am |   |
| Period 3 | 10.20 – 11.10 am | **Interval** | 10.20 – 10.35 am |   |
| **Interval** | 11.10 – 11.25 am | Period 3 | 10.35 – 11.25 am |   |
| Period 4 | 11.25 – 12.15 pm | Period 4 | 11.25 – 12.15 pm |   |
| Period 5 | 12.15 – 1.05 pm | **Lunch** | 12.15 – 1.00 pm |   |
| **Lunch** | 1.05 – 1.50 pm | Period 5 | 1.00 – 1.50 pm |   |
| Period 6 | 1.50 – 2.40pm | Period 6 | 1.50 – 2.40pm |   |
| Period 7 | 2.40 - 3.30 pm | Period 7 | 2.40 - 3.30 pm |   |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Friday****S1-3** | **Friday****S4-6** |
| Registration | 8.30 – 8.40 am | Registration | none |   |
| Period 1 | 8.40 – 9.30 am | Period 1 | 8.40 – 9.30 am |   |
| Period 2 | 9.30 – 10.20 am | Period 2 | 9.30 – 10.20 am |   |
| **Interval** | 10.20 – 10.35 am | Period 3 | 10.20 – 11.10 am |   |
| Period 3 | 10.35 – 11.25 pm | **Interval** | 11.10 – 11.25 pm |   |
| Period 4 | 11.25 – 12.15 pm | Period 4 | 11.25 – 12.15 pm |   |
| **School closes** |   | **School close** |  |  |

**Lunch venues**

Allocated seating areas at break and lunch

* S1 - Bitesite
* S2 - Old Gym
* S3 - Green Seats
* S4 - Bite Site
* S5 - Green Seats
* S6 - Common room

As stated previously, senior students are able to leave the grounds at break time but must return in time for their classes. S1-3 students are not permitted to leave the grounds at interval and should bring snacks/ water to school each day – *See also section on School food catering.*

**Please also note that students returning from lunch will not be able to re-enter the building until:**

S2/3 – 1:45 pm S4-6 12:55 pm

**Google Classroom Codes**

See below for Google classroom codes. These will be useful for students to access for whole school or year level messages especially if there is any disruption to schooling.

S1 - ozujpi3

S2 - rgm5cfg

S3 - 6tkyntf

S4 - j3muruw

S5 - wvtawwy

S6 - bd365rj

**College Students**

Following a Scottish Government updateall College courses will move to online delivery until 24/01/22. Those attending college will be allocated a designated space in school to work in but must bring their own Chromebooks to access the lesson. Students can alternatively sign out and work from home if this is agreed by a parent/carer, this must be confirmed to the school by e-mail or phone call.

Finally a reminder that Prelims start on Wednesday 12 January 2022 for all S5 and S6 and for some S4 courses. The timetable has already been communicated.

If you have any concerns about your child on return to school please contact their Guidance teacher via the school office in the first instance.

I will continue to keep you updated on what has been a fast moving picture and we remain committed to maintaining the education of young people whilst also keeping them safe at school.

Kind regards

Craig Biddick

Head Teacher