



4th January 2022

Dear Parent or Guardian,

I hope that you and your family had an enjoyable and safe Christmas.

I wanted to update you on information relating to the school re-opening this week and on upcoming events.

During the Christmas break, the Prime Minister updated national guidance on face coverings in school. **From Tuesday 4th January 2022, face coverings should be worn by students and staff in classrooms, although teachers will not have to wear face coverings when addressing the class from a safe, socially distanced, position.** This is a temporary measure aimed to reduce the spread of the Omicron variant within schools and is due to be reviewed at the end of January.

Some people may be exempt from wearing a face covering; if your child is exempt and you have not already informed the school, please do contact us as soon as you can. We would like to stress the importance of students being sensitive towards individual circumstances, particularly in instances in which their peers may not be wearing a face covering. Please bear in mind that staff will not necessarily remember every child that is exempt from wearing a face covering, so I ask for understanding if a child who is exempt is asked about their covering. In these situations, students just need to say that they are exempt. Should a student forget their face covering, they should go to reception where we have spares.

Students, staff and visitors should continue to wear face coverings in all communal areas within the school, unless they are exempt. Similarly, students should continue to wear face coverings on public and dedicated school transport, again, unless they are exempt. Other protective measures that were in place before the Christmas break remain in place:

- Face coverings
- Ventilation in classrooms
- Contact tracing and isolation
- Revert to Teams assemblies
- Parent access to the office will be limited and it is strongly advised that you call or email the school before coming on to the premises.
- Limit visitors to site to essential visitors only



Following my communication before the Christmas break, students are required to undertake an LFT test before returning to school. There will be on-site testing for those who booked a slot. LFT kits are available from school.

We will of course, do all we can to keep our school open for face-to-face learning. However, if we are impacted by rising case numbers within year groups or large staff absences, we may need to move some year groups to remote learning. We can all play our part in preventing this by following the safety measures in place such as wearing face coverings, maintaining good hand hygiene, being mindful about social distancing and taking regular lateral flow tests.

Important

Following the Christmas break, if your child has developed symptoms of COVID-19 they should not attend school, instead a PCR test should be booked for them and advice sought from the NHS website at <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>.

We continue to encourage all students and staff to participate in regular COVID-19 testing. This will help reduce transmission after a period of social mixing during the holidays. Students are asked to continue testing twice weekly at home and to report all results to NHS Test and Trace and to their setting using this [link](#). We continue to make LFT tests available to students who need them. Even if you have tested positive for COVID-19 within the last 90 days, you are strongly encouraged to take part in LFT testing once you have completed the isolation period for prior infection.

A reminder that since Wednesday 22 December, the 10-day self-isolation period for people has changed. If your child receives a negative test result on day 6 and day 7 (at least 24 hours apart) then they can leave self-isolation on day 7.

As you know, we have been working hard to ensure that teaching spaces are well ventilated but this does have an impact on the room temperature. From the start of term, students will be able to wear a coat in class if they are cold, but it will be a temporary measure and I will announce when it is to be removed. As a reminder, students should not wear a hoodie to school or a non-uniform jumper as a substitute for a coat. Hoodies and non-uniform jumpers worn by students will be confiscated until the end of the school day.



Other, non-Covid updates and reminders

Year 13 begin their mocks this week and we wish them luck. It is important that Year 13 have the chance to show what they can do in a formal examination setting and to get some valuable feedback on their performance ahead of the summer session.

Where we can, we will arrange for 2m distancing in the examination hall allowing students to remove their face coverings. However, if we are unable to arrange for 2m distancing for a particular paper, we will need to ask students to wear face coverings for the duration of the examination, just like they would do in a lesson.

Year 11 sat their mock examinations before Christmas and will receive their grades on 20th January. Parents will be sent electronic copies of the mock results after students have received them. Starting next week, year 11 will be taking taster sessions for the A levels that interest them. I encourage students to make use of the time in class to ask their teachers questions so that they can be as informed as possible. It is also worth revisiting the year 12 transition page on our website [here](#) to help with that all-important decision-making process. The deadline for year 12 options is 28th January.

Students will be able to eat their packed lunches in their tutor rooms during the first lunch sitting if they wish. All waste should be taken home and not deposited in the classroom bins. Any food bought at Bertha's will need to be eaten outside and any food bought in the refectory will need to be eaten in Newman Hall. Food purchased from the grab and go bar can be eaten in Newman or outside. Of course, students will be given full details in school.

We have two Trust wide staff training events between now and the end of the academic year. The first is on **Tuesday 15th March** and the second is on **Wednesday 22nd June**. On these days the school will **finish for students at 1.15pm**. We invest a lot of time into our staff training to ensure that your child receives the very best teaching and learning experience in the classroom. As an example, since September, our training has been focusing on knowledge and retrieval so that teachers have a teaching 'toolkit' to help children to identify and 'plug' their knowledge gaps following periods of lockdown. This year, to enable our staff time to immerse themselves further in this essential training, we will be closing school at 1.15pm on Tuesday 15th March and Wednesday 22nd June and students will be provided with work to complete at home. Please note, if students receive a meal in the canteen, they



will still be able to do this before leaving the site. Please make any necessary arrangements for your child to return home safely on these two dates. We will be unable to arrange for the DHSB bus service to collect students for these early finishes.

We have chosen to dedicate Friday 8th April as the school holiday day in lieu of the Queen's Jubilee bank holiday. This means that the last day of the Spring term will be Thursday 7th April.

I hope that the information in this letter is helpful and clear. If you have any questions, please email office@plymouthhighschoolforgirls.org.uk We are committed to ensuring that our school is a safe learning environment for pupils and staff and will continue to take decisions in the best interests of our students, while following Government rules and advice.

Very best wishes,

Simon Underdown.
Headteacher.