



St Bede's Catholic High School

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29th November, 2021

COVID-19 Actions following recent government announcements

Dear Parents and carers,

On Friday, 26th November you may have seen the Department for Education's directive for schools to reintroduce safety measures and to test all students upon their return to school in January. Unlike most schools in the country, we have continued to test at least one year group per day.

We hope that this has helped to keep numbers of COVID absences to a minimum. Our overall attendance is much higher than local regions and in comparison to schools nationally. We will continue to carry out this testing until the end of the year and in January. When we do return, we will look to test all students as quickly as possible upon their return.

The Department for Education has also now directed the following measures to be implemented:

Face coverings

Face coverings should be worn in communal areas in all settings by staff, visitors and pupils or students in year 7 and above, unless they are exempt.

Pupils or students (in year 7 or above) should continue to wear face coverings on public and dedicated school transport unless they are exempt.

Testing

All educational and childcare settings should continue to encourage staff and students to test twice weekly using lateral flow device (LFD) tests.

Contact tracing and isolation

The [current guidance on contact tracing and isolation](#) remains in place. In addition to these, any suspected or confirmed close contacts of the Omicron variant will be asked to isolate for 10 days regardless of vaccination status or age. You will be contacted directly and told to isolate by NHS Test and Trace.

Vaccination

All eligible staff and students aged 12 and over are encouraged to take up the offer of the vaccine, including boosters.

Vaccines are our best defence against COVID-19. They help protect young people and adults, and benefit those around them. Vaccination makes people less likely to catch the virus and less likely to pass it on.

To book a vaccination, please visit: [Book or manage a coronavirus \(COVID-19\) vaccination – NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](#).

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Mrs Taylor (Assistant School Business Manager) and Mrs Smith (Student Services Manager), who have led our testing programme. They have been supported by the marvellous School Pastors team. The team have helped us voluntarily and we could not carry out the testing programme without their support. In addition, Mr Emmett and our site team have made sure that we are well stocked with tests which have been distributed regularly. Our staff in school and the School Pastors have gone above and beyond which has meant we have kept school as safe as possible.

We currently have some PCR kits available in school should parents, pupils or staff struggle to get an appointment for a test locally.

We will continue with our existing measures which include:

- Monitoring air quality in rooms
- Daily testing

- Staggered break
- Staggered exit from school
- Additional cleaning
- Hand sanitising material around school

We will keep you informed if there is any additional guidance, and we hope that the situation in school remains safe and calm. In the meantime, please remember the government guidance around the symptoms of COVID 19 and the actions we can all keep to minimise the spread:

Symptoms of COVID 19

The most common symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) are recent onset of:

- new continuous cough and/or
- high temperature and/or
- a loss of, or change in, normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia)

For most people, coronavirus (COVID-19) will be a mild illness.

If your child does develop symptoms, you can seek advice from the nhs.uk website at <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/check-if-you-have-coronavirus-symptoms/>. If you are concerned about your child's symptoms, or they are worsening you can seek advice from NHS 111 at <https://111.nhs.uk/> or by phoning 111.

How to stop COVID-19 spreading

There are things you can do to help reduce the risk of you and anyone you live with getting ill with COVID-19

Do

- wash your hands with soap and water often – do this for at least 20 seconds
- use hand sanitiser gel if soap and water are not available
- wash your hands as soon as you get home
- cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze
- put used tissues in the bin immediately and wash your hands afterwards

Further Information

Further information is available at

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

Yours sincerely,



Mr P Denton,

Headteacher