



Blackfen School for Girls

Raising aspirations - releasing potential

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Dear Parents/Carers,

A happy new year to you and to your family. I am writing at the start of this term to update you on procedures in line with the recent Covid-19 guidance for schools and the community in general. I would like to thank you for your support for the testing programme which is taking place over these first two days of the term. Our aim is that all young people test themselves twice a week using the lateral flow tests. A further box of test kits will be available for all students to collect on their way out of the gate on Friday this week.

Isolation

The guidance is that, if a young person or anyone tests positive for Covid-19, they can now isolate for 7 days rather than 10 days. Day 0 is the first day of isolation – the day of the positive test or the day of the onset of symptoms. To finish isolation on day 7 they will need to do a lateral flow test on day 6 and another one on day 7 (at least 24 hours apart). If both are negative, they can come out of isolation. However, they should still limit close contact with people outside their household, especially in crowded, enclosed or poorly ventilated areas. This guidance is in place until the end of 10 full days.

A close contact of a positive case is strongly advised to do a lateral flow test every day. This applies to all young people under the age of 18 years and 6 months or anyone over this age who is fully vaccinated (2 doses) If the test is negative then they are able to attend school as normal.

Face coverings

The DfE guidance is as follows: Face coverings help protect the wearer and others against the spread of infection because they cover the nose and mouth, which are the main confirmed sources of transmission of COVID-19.

From 4 January 2022, we recommend that in those schools where students in year 7 and above are educated, face coverings should be worn in classrooms. This does not apply in situations where wearing a face covering would impact on the ability to take part in exercise or strenuous activity, for example in PE lessons. This is a temporary measure.

Where students in year 7 and above are educated, we also recommend that face coverings should be worn by students, staff and adult visitors when moving around the premises, outside of classrooms, such as in corridors and communal areas. This will also be a temporary

measure. These students must also wear a face covering when travelling on public transport and should wear it on dedicated transport to and from school.

Face coverings do not need to be worn by students when outdoors.

Circumstances where people are not able to wear face coverings

There are some circumstances where people may not be able to wear a face covering. We are mindful and respectful of such circumstances. Some people are less able to wear face coverings, and the reasons for this may not be visible to others.

In relation to education settings, this includes (but is not limited to):

Children under the age of 11 on 31 August 2021;

People who cannot put on, wear or remove a face covering because of a physical or mental illness or impairment, or disability;

People for whom putting on, wearing or removing a face covering will cause severe distress;

People speaking to or providing assistance to someone who relies on lip reading, clear sound or facial expressions to communicate;

Avoiding the risk of harm or injury to yourself or others;

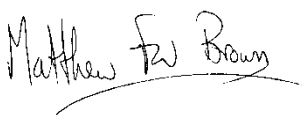
Removing a face covering in order to take medication.

At Blackfen school it is expected that all members of the community wear a face covering indoors. The only exception to this is when students or staff are sitting at break or lunch eating or drinking. This will be in place until 26th January 2022 in the first instance. Please can you make sure that your child has a face covering (preferably more than one) with them every day. A student who is exempt from wearing a face covering should wear a lanyard or carry a card to show exemption.

I would like to thank you for your ongoing support in helping us to make the school a safer environment through the measures being put in place. Please continue to update us on any positive test results so that work can be set. These are challenging times and it is important that we all work together to aim to further reduce the spread of Covid-19 at this time.

My best wishes to you and to your family for 2022.

Yours sincerely,



Matthew Brown
Head Teacher