



1 December 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

COVID-19 Update

I hope you and your families are well. I am writing with an update on the COVID-19 situation at Helston Community College, following recent government announcements regarding the Omicron variant. Most of the guidance hasn't changed and the new national measures that are being introduced are temporary and precautionary and will be reviewed in three weeks.

Face coverings

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. We continue to ask that face coverings be worn by all staff and adult visitors when moving around the school premises such as in corridors and communal areas, unless an individual is exempt. Face coverings do not need to be worn in classrooms or when outdoors.

While we will supply face coverings to those who do not have them, please encourage your child to bring their own, reusable, face covering to school every day – this helps to protect all members of our community, as well as being better for the environment.

Tracing close contacts and isolation

The current guidance on contact tracing and isolation remains in place - which means that close contacts should take PCR tests, but do not need to isolate unless they are over 18 and unvaccinated. Close contacts in schools are now identified by NHS Test and Trace and education settings are not expected to undertake contact tracing.

As with positive cases in any other setting, NHS Test and Trace will work with the positive case and/or their parent to identify close contacts. Contacts from a school setting will only be traced by NHS Test and Trace where the positive case and/or their parent specifically identifies the individual as being a close contact. This is likely to be a small number of individuals who would be most at risk of contracting COVID-19 due to the nature of the close contact.

However, **in the case of the new Omicron variant, ALL individuals who have been identified as a close contact of a suspected or confirmed case, will be contacted directly, asked to take a PCR test AND to self-isolate for a period of 10 days, irrespective of vaccination status and age.**

Control measures in school

We will continue to:

- Ensure good hygiene and operational safety measures for everyone.
- Maintain appropriate cleaning regimes.
- Keep occupied spaces well ventilated.
- Follow public health advice on testing, self-isolation and managing confirmed cases of COVID-19.

Attendance

School attendance is mandatory for all students of compulsory school age and it is a priority to ensure that as many children as possible regularly attend school. Students who have symptoms of COVID-19 should not attend school, until they have taken a PCR test which shows a negative result for COVID-19.

Remote education

We will maintain our capacity to deliver high-quality remote education across this academic year. Where appropriate, we will support those students who need to self-isolate to work or learn from home if they are well enough to do so, by setting work via Google Classroom. We will work collaboratively with families and put in place reasonable adjustments so that students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) can successfully access remote education.

Vaccination

The government advises all eligible staff and students aged 12 and over to take up the offer of the vaccine, including boosters.

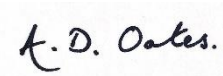
COVID-19 testing

It is important that all members of our community continue to test themselves using a Lateral Flow Test twice weekly. Test kits can be collected by your child at any lunchtime this week.

The DfE would like to encourage staff and students to continue to test regularly over the Christmas holidays. We will be issuing more test kits to students before the end of term. All secondary schools have been told to prepare to test students onsite once they return to school after the Christmas holidays. We will update you soon on the arrangements for testing all Helston students during the week commencing 4 January 2022.

In the meantime, take very good care of yourselves.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "A. D. Oates." The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'A'.

Mr Andrew Oates
Senior Assistant Headteacher

