



29th November 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

Re: Autumn Term Week 12 Headteacher Update

Unfortunately following the emergence of the Omicron variant of Covid-19 there are a number of increased measures which will take place as of tomorrow (30th November) at St James'. On Saturday 27th November, the Prime Minister announced new temporary measures following the emergence of the Omicron variant of COVID-19 in the UK. The new measures will be introduced as a precaution to slow down the spread of the variant while we gather more information. Please do be aware as further guidance is distributed by Public Health England and/or the Local Authority there may be further measures introduced.

- **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. If your child is exempt please email b.ohara@stjamesheadle.co.uk so that she can let staff know
- **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.
- **Vaccination;** All eligible staff and students aged 12 and over are encouraged to take up the offer of the vaccine, including boosters. To book a vaccination, please visit: [Book or manage a coronavirus \(COVID-19\) vaccination – NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](#).

Following a successful round of recruitment, I am delighted to let you know that we have been successful in appointing a new SENCO. Miss Bickerton, our current Deputy Director of Creative Technology, has been successful in gaining the position of SENCO and will begin work in this crucial role with immediate effect. I am sure you will join me in offering your congratulations. As you may be aware, Mrs Pickles has been carrying out the role of acting SENCO since September and will be working closely with Miss Bickerton to ensure there is a smooth handover. If you have any SEND queries, please contact Miss Bickerton directly.

This week our mock examinations begin for our Year 11 children. Dr Guscott has delivered an assembly to these children to highlight the importance of these mock examinations. All of our Year 11s have been made aware that in the highly unlikely event that examinations do not go ahead in the summer of 2022 then these mock examinations will form part of their Teacher Assessed Grade (TAG). We wish our children all the very best over the next two weeks and please do keep them in your thoughts and prayers.

A reminder that our Year 10 Parents' Evening takes place on Thursday this week from 4pm to 7pm. As per Dr Guscott's email from 17th November this event will be held virtually. Please do be aware that staff may be conducting this from home so there could be some background noise and a reminder that appointment times will be tight. Thank you in advance for your co-operation and understanding. As always following this evening there will be a parental voice questionnaire, please can I ask you to complete this as it really does help us as a school with forward planning, it should take no longer than 5 minutes to complete and will be sent to you on Google Forms.



ST JAMES'

CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

Yesterday we celebrated the first Sunday of Advent; we were given the opportunity to focus our thoughts on hope. This is so appropriate given everything that has gone on in our world over the last 18 months and especially the announcement this weekend. We now have the opportunity to reflect, pray and eagerly anticipate the celebration of Christ's birth this Christmas. Our two Advent wreaths are now in school, in reception and in our Chapel. They serve as a reminder and a countdown as we build to the great feast that is Christmas.

Finally, can I once again ask that as you drop your child at school you are considerate to our local neighbours particularly where you park. Please can you also consider turning your engine off whilst waiting for your child to help the environment. Have a fantastic week and if you need us, you know where we are
headteacherpa@stjamesheadle.co.uk

Yours faithfully

Mr A Pontifex
Headteacher