

# Oaklands Catholic School and Sixth Form College

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**Headteacher:** Matthew Quinn B.Ed (Hons), M.A., NPQH

Our Ref: MQ/SM

10 December 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

I hope both you and your families are well and are looking forward to the well-deserved Christmas break.

Before the end of term, there are a number of points I need to share with you, this includes the arrangements for next week, the latest guidance regarding COVID-19 in relation to school, arrangements for testing pupils in school on their return from the Christmas holidays and information about the Flu vaccinations.

As you are probably aware, all secondary schools have been asked by the Government to test all students for covid-19 at the beginning of the Spring Term. Schools have been asked to undertake this public health responsibility.

This will necessitate a staggered start on Tuesday 4 and Wednesday 5 January. Students cannot return to lessons until they have been tested. In brief, Years 10, 11, 12 and 13 will be tested on Tuesday 4 January and Years 7, 8 and 9 on Wednesday 5 January. You will receive a letter on Monday 13 December confirming the details. This decision exposes a tension here between a control measure to reduce risk and the education of young people.

We are required to offer all students one lateral flow device test in school before returning to lessons. Up to one third of people who have COVID-19 are asymptomatic and by testing we will help to reduce the spread in school and college settings through asymptomatic transmission, especially after the Christmas period where there will have been more mixing indoors. Again, we find ourselves in uncertain times, particularly so with the presence of the new Omicron variant.

Rapid testing is a vital part of the Government's plan to suppress transmission of COVID-19 in education settings by identifying asymptomatic positive cases quickly so that those who test positive can self-isolate. This ensures other students can stay in face-to-face education and avoid the potential 10-day isolation that is now in place for those who have been in contact with someone who has tested positive with the Omicron variant. The asymptomatic testing programme does not replace the Government's current testing policy for those with symptoms. Anyone who experiences symptoms of COVID-19 should self-isolate immediately and book a PCR test.

In preparation for the testing we need to update our parental permission form. Whilst the testing is voluntary, we would encourage all students to take it. Please follow this link:

**[IN-SCHOOL LFD TESTING CONSENT FORM](#)**

**This form needs to be completed even if you have submitted one before and even if you do not give consent.**

**Sixth Form Applications from Year 11s**

A final reminder that the first deadline for applications to Sixth Form at Oaklands is Thursday 16 December 2021. Though late applications are accepted in 2022, students may find choices restricted due to timetable blocks being constructed using students' choices from those who meet the deadline next week. The application form can be found [here](#).

**Last Day of Term**

The last day of term for student is Thursday 16 December and the school finishes at normal time.

**Face Coverings**

DfE guidance is now that face coverings should be worn in all communal areas and when moving around the school. This applies to everyone on site unless they are exempt. Face coverings should also be worn on public transport.

**Attendance**

The latest Government guidance to school states that 'School attendance remains mandatory and all the usual rules continue to apply. Enabling children and young people to attend their education setting regularly continues to be a national priority.'

Ensuring your child attends school every day is crucial in helping them achieve the best possible outcomes. Any child whose attendance sits below 90% is classified as a persistent absentee. If you are worried about your child's attendance, then please speak to your child's form tutor in the first instance.

If your child feels slightly unwell before school, please encourage them to come in and see if they feel better when they are here. If they feel unwell throughout the day, we will send them home. If they are too unwell to come into school then, please contact the school absence line or email [attendance@oaklandscatholicschool.org](mailto:attendance@oaklandscatholicschool.org) to inform us before 8.50am.

**COVID-19 Home Testing and Vaccinations**

Students should be conducting Lateral Flow (LFD) tests at home twice a week, including over the holidays. Please continue to support this initiative. We are in the process of changing the way this is reported to the school. Mrs Bonnington will write to you separately about this. Test results still have to be reported to the NHS.

Many 12-15 year olds took up the NHS offer of vaccination in school. Our rates of uptake were higher than many other schools. If for some reason you did not take up this offer at school you can book vaccinations via the NHS.

We have received confirmation that there will be a follow up vaccination offer from the NHS in the Spring Term. 12-15 year olds will be offered a second jab. Our understanding is that anyone aged 16 or over should book their second vaccination at a vaccination centre via the NHS from 12 weeks after their first vaccination.

### **Flu Vaccinations (Years 7 – 11) – 15 and 16 December**

A further reminder that the flu vaccinations (nasal spray) will be taking place in school on Wednesday 15 and Thursday 16 December for all students in Years 7-11. Information has been sent out to all parents via separate communication. A link to this can be found here [Flu Vaccination Parent Letter 2021](#).

It is very important that you complete the online consent form by the end of Monday 13 December, so that the NHS Immunisation Team and the school can finalise the details. [Flu Vaccination Consent Form](#) (Unique code for Oaklands is SH137345).

We will not be able to accept students on the day if this online form has not been completed in advance.

### **OFPA Raffle**

The Oaklands Friends and Parents' Association are holding an online Christmas raffle. Prizes are special Christmas Treat Hampers and tickets are available to buy via your child's Scopay account, costing £1.00 each.

Tickets can be purchased until the end of the day on Monday 13 December and the draw will be made before the end of term.

Thank you for your support with this.

### **Overseas travel**

If you are planning to travel overseas during the Christmas period please check the requirements regarding self-isolation for when you return. The guidance on this is changing rapidly so I cannot be sure what will be in place at the start of term.

Finally, a copy of the Oaklands news will be published at the end of term, please look out for this as it will contain term dates for the rest of this academic year and into next.

Thank you for your ongoing support.

Yours sincerely



Mr M Quinn  
**Headteacher**