



Kirkburton Middle School

Turnshaws Avenue
Kirkburton
Huddersfield
HD8 0TJ

Headteacher: Mr C Taylor

Telephone: 01484 222737

Email: office@kirkburtonmiddleschool.co.uk

Web: www.kirkburtonmiddleschool.co.uk

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10th December 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

I hope you are well. Following the government's announcement of 'Plan B' restrictions, I would like to update you on actions we are taking in school in order to keep everybody as safe as possible and also outline our arrangements for the return to school in January.

Guidance for schools

Updated [guidance for schools](#) was released yesterday however there is very little change from the previous version. Specific [guidance for parents and carers](#) can be found here. The key headlines are –

- School attendance remains mandatory
- Face coverings should be worn in communal areas and on school transport
- Clinically extremely vulnerable people are not being advised to shield again
- All those involved in education to continue regular lateral flow device (LFD) testing, including pupils in Year 7 and above
- Parents, carers and other visitors are asked to take a LFD test before entering school.
- All individuals who have been identified as a close contact of a suspected or confirmed case of the Omicron variant of COVID-19 will be required to self-isolate and book a PCR test.

Our response

Based on this guidance, very little will change in school for the final week of term as most measures are already in place. At the time of writing this letter we are aiming to continue with all our planned events, including full year group assemblies. This is because the number of confirmed positive cases in school remains low, community transmission levels are relatively low and the vaccination uptake locally is relatively high. Should the situation show any signs of worsening, we will revisit our risk assessment and make the necessary changes. We would ask for your support with the following –

- Ensuring your child has a face mask each day, unless exempt.
- Encouraging your child to wear an extra layer under their school uniform as classrooms may be a little cooler due to increased ventilation. Where necessary, pupils will be allowed to wear their coats in class.
- Engaging or continuing to engage with twice weekly LFD testing
- Keeping your child at home if they are showing [symptoms of COVID-19](#) and getting them tested



In line with the updated guidance, **parents attending school for the Christmas show next week are asked to take a LFD test before coming in to school and we ask that face masks are worn whilst inside the school building unless you are exempt.** The hall has good ventilation however we recommend you bring a coat as it may be cooler than usual.

Return to school in January

The government has asked secondary schools, Years 7 & 8 for us at KMS, to provide an on-site test for pupils on return in January. The test is voluntary, but I would encourage everyone to take it - further details can be found below. In order to accommodate the testing, the start to the school term will once again need to be staggered.

- Tuesday 4th January – INSET Day
- Wednesday 5th January – Year 6 and Year 8 pupils return
- Thursday 6th January – Year 7 pupils return

I hope this letter answers any question you may have had in relation to the school's response to the latest COVID-19 guidance. Our priority remains providing pupils with as rich a school experience as possible whilst doing all we can to ensure the safety of our school community.

Yours sincerely,



Mr C Taylor
Headteacher

NHS Test and Trace: COVID-19 testing for staff and pupils

We are working to keep our school as safe as possible and upon return to school in January 2022 are offering mass LFD Testing to our current Year 7 and 8 pupils who want to participate.

Along with the other protective measures we are taking, these tests will help staff and pupils to remain in school safely. Up to one third of people who have coronavirus experience no symptoms. By testing we will help to stop the virus spread and help to keep our school open as safely as possible. The test is **voluntary**, but we would encourage everyone to take it.

The school will administer one test on site and then ask that your child completes another test at home 3-5 days later.

If you are happy for your child to be tested and have already given consent in the past then you do not need to do anything. If you wish to withdraw this consent then we ask that your child informs us on the day

of testing that they no longer wish to participate. [If you have not given consent before then please fill in the online consent statement here \(one per pupil\)](#). **Please complete this as soon as possible and no later than Wednesday 15th December 2021.**

Those taking the test will be supervised by trained staff. The 'lateral flow' tests are quick and easy using a nasal swab. For under 18s, staff will oversee the swab process.

We know these tests work - in validation studies conducted by Oxford University and Public Health England, they were shown to be as accurate in identifying a case as a PCR test (99.68% specificity). The tests have lower sensitivity but they are better at picking up cases when a person has higher viral load, hence the need to test frequently.

Testing will be offered free of charge.

What if a pupil tests positive?

Participating staff and pupils who test positive will be informed about their results individually. Where participants are under 16, parents or legal guardians will also be notified. Pupils will need to take a further 'PCR test' (similar to those done in local and regional testing sites) on the same day (or as soon as possible). School will be able to provide these PCR test kits to perform at home or you can go to <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test> or call 119 to book a follow-up test. If ordering a PCR test yourselves, they should choose to visit a drive-through test site if possible, as it is faster than requesting a home test.

During this time while they wait for the PCR result (via text / email) they will need to self-isolate.

If the PCR test returns a positive result you will be required to follow the current guidance from NHS Test and Trace.

We will support our staff and pupils throughout, but please contact the school office if you need this information in any other language or format or if you have any questions.

Please click the link below to read our testing privacy statement

[COVID-19 Testing at home of pupils and students in Secondary Schools and Colleges Privacy Statement](#)