

4 Jan 2022

Dear Parent/Carer,

Happy New Year. I hope you have had a restful Christmas break. Please accept my apologies for emailing this letter before we return to school, we just need to update you on some minor updates we have received from the Government to COVID-19 guidance over the Christmas break. We are looking forward to welcoming students in N2 (Pre-School)* to Year 8 and Year 11 back on Wednesday 5th January and Year 9 and 10 on Thursday 6th January. Children in Y7 to 11 who are taught in our alternative provision setting should follow the specific information provided to them by Mrs. Gore at the end of last term.

*Please note that the N1 (2-3 years room) will reopen on Monday 10th January. The Nursery team will make contact with families this week.

Face Coverings

Government guidance now states that face coverings must be worn by children in year 7 and above at all times whilst inside the building. The only exceptions are those children who are medically exempt. Students should provide their own face coverings, we have a small number in school for children who do not have a face covering. Visitors to the academy and parents who are picking up children at the gates are asked to wear a face covering.

Lateral Flow Testing

Students in Y7 and above will be tested in school this week, beyond this they should test twice weekly at home and report the test results using the NHS online service. We are provided with test kits to give to children in Y7 and above and will continue to offer these weekly. Students over the age of 5 are also able to test twice weekly and report results, we are unfortunately not provided with test kits for children in Y6 and below.

Changes to self isolation for positive cases

Over the Christmas period the Government changed the rules on self isolation for positive cases. You can now test using a lateral flow test on day 6 and day 7, if these are both negative, you can end self isolation. We have provided a graphic on the reverse of this letter to explain the new rules.

Changes to self isolation for close contacts

Children under the age of 18 years and 6 months are not required by the Government to self isolate if they are a close contact of a positive case. They are strongly advised to take a daily lateral flow test for 7 days and to isolate if this is positive.

Testing at school for children in Y7 and above

Over the last term a number of children have arrived at school with cold-like symptoms and during the day then asked for a lateral flow test which is subsequently positive. Some of these children have other household members who are positive for COVID-19. Could we please ask that if a child has cold-like symptoms, parents/carers ensure a lateral flow test is done **before** the child comes to school in the morning.

Staff absences and remote learning

I wrote to you at the end of last term to thank you for your patience and understanding with the high numbers of staff absences last term. We are already aware of at least 9 staff who have tested positive for COVID-19 over the holiday period and are unavailable for work this week. It is likely that numbers will increase, we will do everything possible to keep the school fully open but must now prepare for the likely need to ask some children to work at home remotely if we can't cover lessons.

Material for all children is routinely uploaded to Google Classroom and we will continue to do so. If it is necessary for a group of children to move to remote learning, lessons will move online. If children require IT equipment this will be loaned for the duration of the period of remote learning only, please could parents/carers ensure this equipment is well cared for as it will need to be returned and used by other children.

Ventilation

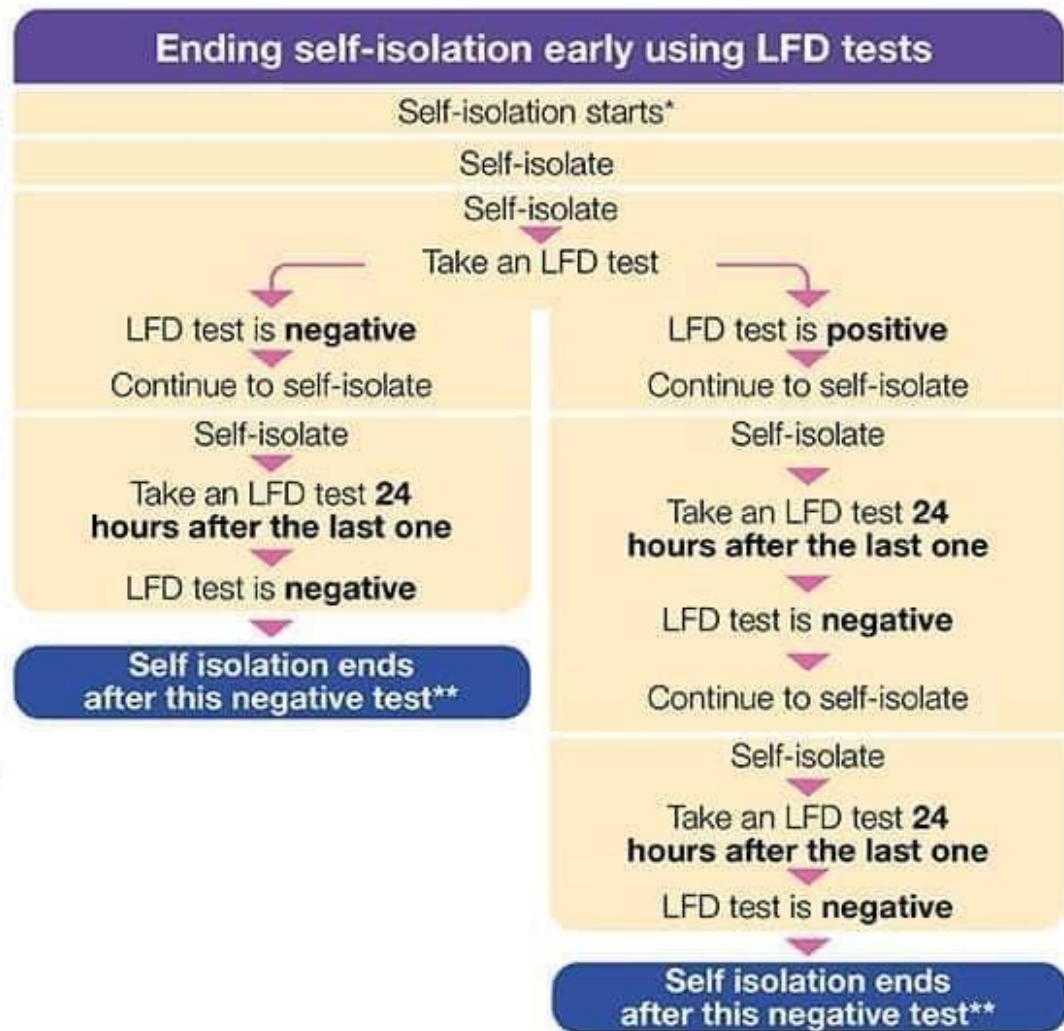
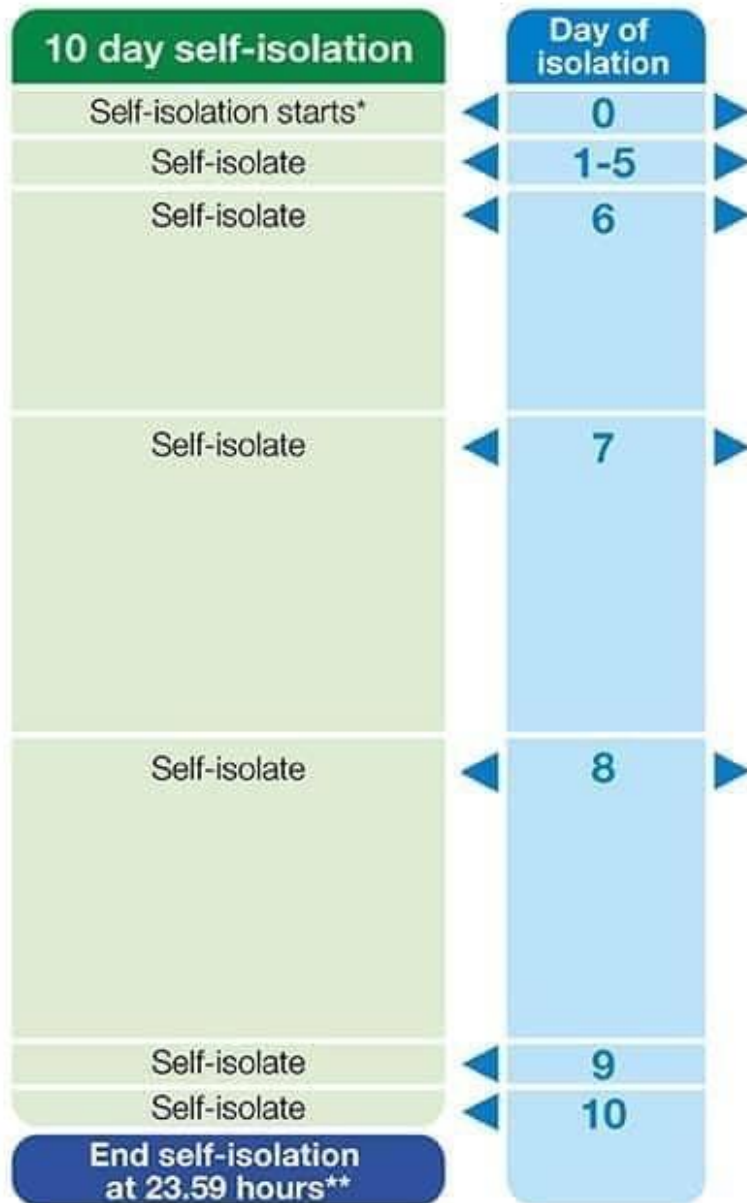
We will open windows and doors to increase ventilation in classrooms. A significant number of Unity jumpers were provided to children in year groups where blazers are worn last year at a cost to the academy. If children are cold in classrooms, we would ask that the Unity jumper is worn under the blazer, if you do not have a Unity jumper a plain black V neck jumper can be worn. Students will be required to remove any jumpers or hoodies which do not fit into this category. **The Unity PE hoodie should not be worn underneath blazers, this is for use in PE lessons only.**

We are looking forward to the term ahead and welcoming children back into school this week.

Yours sincerely,



Mr. S. Cooke
Headteacher



* Day your symptoms started or your test was taken if you do not have symptoms

** You can stop self-isolating if you do not have a high temperature