



4th January 2022

Dear Parent/Carer

Start of Term Messages from the Principals

We would like to start by wishing you and your families a very Happy New Year. As you will have heard in the news, the Department for Education has issued new guidance to schools in the light of the ongoing concerns regarding the omicron variant of COVID-19. As always, we have reviewed our Risk Assessment and we would like to update you on the measures in place at Minsthorpe Community College to limit the spread of the virus.

Lateral Flow Testing

We would like to thank you for ensuring that your child has taken a lateral flow device (LFD) test either at home or onsite before returning to College after the Christmas break. We remind you of the importance of twice weekly testing and the need to report the result to NHS Test and Trace and to College. Students can collect testing kits from the social areas at snack break.

Changes to the wearing of face coverings

In response to the latest government guidance, students at Minsthorpe Community College now need to wear a face covering:

- before and after College
- in classrooms and the PE changing rooms
- in indoor dining areas
- when moving along corridors and around the site between lessons
- when moving to and from their designated dining area and toilets.

Students do not need to wear a face covering when eating and drinking, in practical PE lessons, in exams or if given permission by a member of staff.

If a student has a medical or other reason for not wearing a face covering (of which we are not yet aware), we ask that parents/carers contact the College to discuss the reasons. An exemption sticker will be placed in the student's Jotter to show to staff on request. Students are expected to provide their own face covering and to ensure that it is routinely washed, if they choose to wear one that is re-usable. Spare masks will be made available at the College, but only as an emergency supply.

Changes to Self-Isolation Period

Since Wednesday 22 December, the 10-day self-isolation period for people who record a positive PCR test result for COVID-19 has been reduced to 7 days. Students may now take LFD tests on day 6 and day 7 of their self-isolation period. Those who receive two negative test results are no longer required to complete 10 full days of self-isolation. The first test must be taken no earlier than day 6 of the self-isolation period and tests must be taken 24 hours apart. If both these test results are negative, and the student does not have a high temperature, they may end their self-isolation after the second negative test result and return to College from day 8.

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Principals Mark Gilmore & Rachael Merritt



As always, we ask you to inform College in the usual ways with details of any student absence from College.

Daily Testing for Close Contacts

People who are fully vaccinated, or children and young people aged between 5 and 18 years and 6 months, identified as a close contact of someone with COVID-19, should take an LFD test every day for seven days and continue to attend College as normal, unless they have a positive test result or develop symptoms at any time.

Remote Learning

We firmly believe that maintaining face-to-face education for our students is a priority, providing we can do so safely. We want to reassure you that we have plans in place if we need to revert to remote learning. Students have full access to Satchel: One and Microsoft Teams to engage with online work, if this becomes a necessity, and we intend to revisit this with all year groups this term. The College has a supply of Chrome Books which we can lend to students who do not have a suitable device to work at home. We sincerely hope that we do not face this situation, but we would be foolish not to prepare for every eventuality.

Final Word

This continues to be a worrying time in terms of the pandemic, but please feel reassured that our usual COVID measures are in place, such as hand hygiene and good ventilation, to help to minimise the spread of infection. We thank you for your ongoing support as detailed in this letter, including regular LFD testing, providing your child with a face covering and adhering to guidance regarding self-isolation. We encourage you to contact College by email enquiries@minsthorpe.cc or by using the School Gateway app, if you have any questions about the content of this letter.

As we begin the new term, we will be speaking to the students in assemblies about our College vision:

Minsthorpe Community College – a place where everyone plays a part in strengthening our learning community through Motivation, Commitment and Care.

We will be asking them to focus particularly on the value of 'Commitment' and the need to maintain our efforts when faced with challenges. We thank you for supporting your child as they rise to this challenge.

Yours sincerely

Mr M Gilmore
Principal

Mrs R Merritt
Principal

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