



6<sup>th</sup> September 2021

Dear Parents / Carers,

I hope this letter finds you well and happy that your children are returning to school for a new school year, hopefully a less disrupted one than the previous two.

As you know the students who have consent are being tested twice as they return to school, and we hope that you will ensure students are testing twice weekly at home.

The government has issued updated guidance for schools which you can view here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/schools-covid-19-operational-guidance> This guidance will be reviewed at the end of September. Below is a summary of the main points and changes from last term are in bold:

### **When an individual develops COVID-19 symptoms or has a positive test**

Pupils, staff and other adults should follow public health advice on [when to self-isolate and what to do](#). They should not come into school if they have symptoms, have had a positive test result or other reasons requiring them to stay at home due to the risk of them passing on COVID-19 (for example, they are required to quarantine following time abroad).

If anyone in school develops [COVID-19 symptoms](#), however mild, they will be sent home to follow public health advice.

### **Close Contacts**

As with positive cases in any other setting, **NHS Test and Trace will work with the positive case and/or their parent to identify close contacts**. Contacts from a school setting will only be traced by NHS Test and Trace where the positive case and/or their parent specifically identifies the individual as being a close contact. This is likely to be a small number of individuals who would be most at risk of contracting COVID-19 due to the nature of the close contact. **Individuals are not required to self-isolate if they live in the same household as someone with COVID-19, or are a close contact of someone with COVID-19, and any of the following apply:**

- they are fully vaccinated
- they are below the age of 18 years and 6 months
- they have taken part in or are currently part of an approved COVID-19 vaccine trial
- they are not able to get vaccinated for medical reasons

Instead, they will be contacted by NHS Test and Trace, informed they have been in close contact with a positive case and advised to take a [PCR test](#). We would encourage all individuals to take a PCR test if advised to do so. Staff who do not need to isolate, and children and young people aged under 18 years 6 months who usually attend school, and have been identified as a close contact, **should continue to attend school as normal, they do not need to isolate while they await their PCR result**. They do not need to wear a face covering within the school although it may be

a sensible precaution in keeping others safe, but **it is expected and recommended that these are worn when travelling on public or dedicated school transport.**

### **Asymptomatic Testing**

Testing remains important in reducing the risk of transmission of infection within schools. As pupils will potentially mix with lots of other people during the summer holidays, **all secondary students with consent will receive 2 on-site lateral flow device tests, 3 to 5 days apart, on their return in September. To reduce the risk of transmission in school at the start of term, we request that all students take a lateral flow test before they arrive on site.** These can be obtained from your local pharmacy or online.

### **Remote Education**

Remote education will continue to be provided for any student in self-isolation who is well enough to complete the work.

### **Face coverings**

Face coverings are no longer advised for pupils, staff and visitors either in classrooms or in communal areas. The government has removed the requirement to wear face coverings in law but **expects and recommends that they are worn in enclosed and crowded spaces** where you may come into contact with people you don't normally meet. **This includes public transport and dedicated transport to school or college.**

### **Attendance**

School attendance is mandatory for all pupils of compulsory school age, and it is a priority to ensure that as many children as possible regularly attend school.

It has been great to welcome our students back and meeting our new Year 7 cohort. I can assure you that we will be doing all we can to ensure that Rye Hills Academy is as safe as possible for students and staff, including:

- Ensuring good hygiene for everyone.
- Maintaining appropriate cleaning regimes.
- Keeping occupied spaces well ventilated.
- Following public health advice on testing, self-isolation and managing confirmed cases of COVID-19.

Please note that in the case of a significant local outbreak, measures may be reintroduced, and we will follow guidance from PHE.

Each year group is having an assembly during this week to remind them of the standards and expectations at the academy. They are also being reminded about simple actions that they can take to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Please can we ask that you support in ensuring your children arrive at school on time, in the correct uniform and with their equipment for the day.

Many thanks again for the support you give the academy and your children. We are very much looking forward to a positive and progressive year as we welcome the students back refreshed and ready to learn in the Autumn Term.

With best wishes,

**Mrs Waugh**

