



20 January 2022

Dear Parent/Carer

Covid-19 including changes to the isolation period, testing, vaccinations and an end to masks, ONS Covid antibody survey, Year 9 options week (including virtual events), Staying Safe Day, Young Writers' Twisted Tales competition

Welcome to my end of week letter. I am writing this the day after the Prime Minister has announced changes to the Covid restrictions, leading to face coverings in classrooms no longer being recommended from today and communal mask wearing removed from the middle of next week. In the words of the 19th century liberal MP, John Lubbock "What we see depends mainly on what we look for."

Covid-19 including changes to the isolation period, testing, vaccinations and an end to masks, ONS Covid antibody survey

Changes to the self-isolation period came into effect in England on Monday 17 January and applies to all positive cases, regardless of vaccination status.

People who are self-isolating with COVID-19 have the option to reduce their isolation period after 5 full days if they test negative with an LFD test on both day 5 and day 6 and they do not have a temperature. For example, if they test negative on the morning of day 5 and the morning of day 6, they can return to the Academy immediately on day 6.

The first test must be taken no earlier than day 5 of the self-isolation period, and the second must be taken the following day. All test results should be [reported to NHS Test and Trace](#).

If the result of either test is positive, they should continue to self-isolate until they get negative results from two LFD tests on consecutive days or until they have completed 10 full days of self-isolation, whichever is earliest.

The new rules also apply to people who are already isolating – so if someone was already isolating before Monday 17 January, they can take LFD tests on day 5 and 6 and if they are both negative and they have no temperature they can end their isolation.

Anyone who is unable to take LFD tests or anyone who continues to have a temperature will need to complete the full 10-day period of self-isolation.

Further [information on self-isolation for those with COVID-19](#) is available.

We continue to encourage twice weekly testing at home on Wednesdays and Sundays using home LFT kits. This is vital to support us in keeping our academy fully functioning in the winter months whilst infection rates are still higher in the community.

The School Aged Immunisation Service still plan to visit us again to administer first and second doses of the Covid-19 vaccination on Thursday 3 February 2022. Please ensure that they have your consent in advance of the day in order for your child to receive their vaccination, if this is your wish.

Tomorrow, we welcome the Office for National Statistics antibody testing team for the first of several visits until Easter. You will remember that we sent out NHS/ONS letters recently to encourage consent for this non-invasive piece of work. All students taking part will receive an e-voucher for their participation from the ONS.

Covid has caused such nervousness and uncertainty across society that it is hard to see the exact path we will take from here and whether it will cause schools to struggle even more with staffing issues and general pupil attendance or whether this current variant will wither away. What I do know is that we have attempted to carry on unabated and with the least disruption to staff and youngsters as possible. This perhaps doesn't adequately represent the many hours behind the scenes to make this happen but it will remain our mantra in the senior team at RP as we move to a new normal over the next few weeks and certainly up to the Easter period.

Year 9 options week (including virtual events)

As I mentioned in last week's letter, this will take place in school during the week of 24 – 28 January for all Year 9 students and will be accompanied by a dedicated microsite on Frog for student and parent access and a live Q&A event to support anyone needing it. We will also be giving every student a formal published 'prospectus' type guide to the event. This will be given out tomorrow so that Year 9 students have the weekend to discuss our curriculum offer at home. The microsite will also be available from tomorrow to support students and their families in choosing their future courses. This year's offer is the widest ever in the history of the Academy and we welcome some course changes this year as we formally introduce the likes of Hospitality and Catering and Finance which, until now, has only been a sixth form option.

Mr Ward and Mr Kirk will lead a live Q&A as an additional measure and I am aware that he is publishing details imminently of how to sign up.

Staying Safe Day

Next week, on Tuesday 25 January, we have visitors coming into the Academy to talk to our Year 10 students about safety. The Staying Safe Day will cover issues such as road safety,



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healthy relationships, online safety, county lines and knife crime, as well as drugs awareness.

Young Writers' Twisted Tales competition

We have accepted 45 entries for the above competition, which is excellent. All participating students will receive a certificate, a bookmark and the opportunity to be published. A letter should be winging its way to you if you are a parent of one of our entrants to ask for publishing permission and how you may order any books once published.

January can often be a slog for everyone, often weather and finance dependent. I detest having to find a scraper for the car on those cold winter mornings but, as we approach the halfway point in this half term, I hear the words of American opera singer Beverley Sills spurring me on: "I've always tried to go a step past wherever people expected me to end up."

That about sums it up and will frame my 2022. Let's enter the next few weeks with a sense of opportunity.

Keep smiling.

I will write again soon.

Yours faithfully



Mr D Hardy
Head Teacher



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