

Dear Parent / Carer

I am writing to wish you a Happy New Year and update you regarding arrangements for the start of term.

1. **START OF TERM ARRANGEMENTS**

Students are expected to:

- **come into school for a Covid test on Wednesday 5th January** (for timings see separate letter/email dated 10th December).
- be attending **live online lessons via Teams for the remainder of Wednesday 5th January** following their regular Week A timetable.
- **return to school for face-to-face lessons on Thursday 6th January.**
- LFD test at home on Sunday 9th January
- then continue to test at home twice weekly, i.e. on Wednesday & Sunday evenings

Students **do not need to wear uniform** to attend school for their test. The test is voluntary, but I would strongly encourage everyone to take it. In the event that your child is unable to come into school for the Covid test, please ensure they undertake an LFD test at home and report the results in the usual way.

2. **ATTENDANCE MATTERS**

I would like to take this opportunity to **appeal for parents to take a more proactive approach towards school attendance in 2022**. Please note that students are expected to attend school for **in-class face to face learning as the expected norm** to support their education. Some parents seem to mistakenly believe that their child is 'not officially absent' when choosing to work from home via Teams! However, students should be in school unless they are symptomatic or self-isolating.

Keeping schools open is a national priority for good reasons, both for the personal and academic development of young people. Ultimately, **students absent from school won't learn as effectively**. In essence, it is a case of 'Absent today; repent in future' as students are more likely to underachieve in public examinations. Perhaps understandably, the last 18 months has seen lots of people erring on the side of caution. However, this has resulted in **too many 'duvet days' and hundreds of students taking additional time off school** and now falling into the 'at risk of persistent absence' category (below 93%). The numbers are startling, we currently have:

- 721 students below 93% attendance
- 309 of those are directly and legitimately linked to Covid
- 38 students have significant, known, long-term attendance issues

- 374 students with attendance below 93% who need cajoling to attend more regularly!!!

We are all in the process of finding ways to live with the threat of Covid whilst still being able to function effectively. Please send your child into school so long as they keep reporting negative LFD test results.

3. **COVID PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES**

The Department for Education updated their own Covid guidance for schools this week. As a result, **students will now be required to wear face coverings all day long whilst they are in the school building for the next 3 weeks.** The government have now recommended that face coverings are worn in classrooms where pupils in Year 7 and above are educated. The advice is short term only, to support the return to school this term and will be in place until Wednesday 26th January, when government Plan B regulations are currently scheduled to expire, at which point it will be reviewed. Face coverings are not needed outdoors.

Please ensure that your child brings a face covering every day and another spare in case they break or lose it. We will be continuing with our other existing Covid precautionary measures.

4. **UPDATED GOVERNMENT COVID GUIDANCE FOR HOUSEHOLDS WITH POSSIBLE OR CONFIRMED COVID INFECTION**

The government updated their Covid 'Stay at Home' guidance on 30th December;
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>

5. **IN THE EVENT OF EXTREME WEATHER**

In the unlikely event that it does become necessary to close the school due to extreme weather, notices will be placed on our website www.stratforduponavonschool.com, sent by Twitter and email, and a verbal message placed on the switchboard (ring 01789 268051) by 6.45 a.m. at the latest. We also notify Warwickshire County Council, who place lists of all the county school closures on their website.

Thank you for your ongoing support and understanding. Please follow us on twitter [@StraUponAvonSch](https://twitter.com/StraUponAvonSch) for brief, regular updates.

Yours sincerely,



Neil Wallace
Headteacher