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2<sup>nd</sup> September 2021

Dear parents/carers,

**Re: Start of term information and updated COVID-19 protocol**

Yet again this summer, despite the disruptions caused by the pandemic, our Year 11 and Year 13 cohorts left with excellent results. I was immensely proud of how they conducted themselves throughout these difficult times, and the maturity they showed in coping with all the uncertainty and upheaval.

The sheer size and responsibility of managing the current pandemic alongside running a school has been a huge task. I am sure you would all agree that this has been handled impeccably over the past 18 months, putting the safety and wellbeing of students and staff at the core of all decision making.

You will know that I always want the best for each and every student who walks through our gates. I have worked tirelessly over my 14 years here to help make Phoenix School a positive and successful experience and this will not change this academic year.

I am blessed to possess an incredibly knowledgeable and hardworking staff team, who all share our collective belief in growing good young adults who flourish under our guidance. Finally, I look forward to working with both you as parents/carers, and the community as a whole again this year as we begin to move to a new normal after the pandemic. When the school, the student and the parents/carers work together, anything is possible.

In the paragraphs below, I have highlighted the key information you will need for our staggered return to school, and also the updated guidance from the Government surrounding COVID-19 protocol.

**Returning to school**

The government requests that each student takes two Lateral Flow Tests (LFT) within 3-5 days of each other on return to school.

For students in Years 8-13 whose families had already been given consent, we have this recorded.

For students in Year 7, your families should have given consent online for LFT testing following instructions given in the summer.

Your child will also be returning on different days dependant upon which year group they are in, in accordance with Government guidance so that we can facilitate lateral flow testing.

Please see the following table for dates

Year	Testing date	Start to school date (arrival time on-site)
7	Friday 3 <sup>rd</sup> September 9am – 12pm	Monday 6 <sup>th</sup> September 8.30am
8	Friday 3 <sup>rd</sup> September 12pm – 3pm	Monday 6 <sup>th</sup> September 9.15am
9	Tuesday 7 <sup>th</sup> September 9am – 12pm	Wednesday 8 <sup>th</sup> September 8.40am
10	Tuesday 7 <sup>th</sup> September 12pm – 3pm	Wednesday 8 <sup>th</sup> September 8.40am
11	Monday 6 <sup>th</sup> September 9am – 12pm	Tuesday 7 <sup>th</sup> September 8.40am
6 <sup>th</sup> Form	Monday 6 <sup>th</sup> September 12pm – 3pm	Tuesday 7 <sup>th</sup> September 8.40am

### **Changes to COVID-19 School protocol following the Government update on 16<sup>th</sup> August**

The main changes though are as follows:

- Bubbles are no longer required however we will be keeping students within year groups during social times
- If you have symptoms you must still isolate and take a PCR test
- Masks are not required (however, **due to the levels locally we will continue to wear masks in corridors, the main hall during assembly and whilst queuing for lunch**)
- Social distancing is no longer required (but to do so where possible)
- 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
  - if the coronavirus test is negative, the student may come back to school and not self-isolate. Please let school know immediately.

#### **If your child has symptoms:**

You should immediately order/take them to a testing centre for a PCR (lab) test. If the result is negative, your child can stop self-isolating (unless instructed to self-isolate for other reasons). If the PCR result is positive, your child, and close contacts identified by NHS Test and Trace must self-isolate until 10 days after the onset of symptoms.

#### **If your child has a positive result from a lateral flow test (rapid 30-minute test):**

Your child should self-isolate. Please let us know as soon as possible. You should order/take your child for a confirmatory PCR (lab) test. If the PCR test is taken within 2 days and results are negative, your child will no longer need to isolate. If the PCR test is positive, your child must continue to isolate along with close contacts identified by NHS Test and Trace. This is from the date of the positive LFT (rapid) test.

PCR tests can be booked online through the NHS Test and Trace website or by calling 119.

PCR test results will be recorded with NHS Test and Trace automatically, but you should also communicate the result to school completing our Covid-19 form via our school's website: <https://www.aspirebelievesucceed.com/form/?pid=465&form=60> during term time.

### Contact Tracing

#### **If your child has a positive PCR (lab) test result:**

NHS Test and Trace will contact you, using the details you registered when ordering/arranging the PCR test. You and/or your child will be asked a series of specific questions designed to identify who your child has been in close contact with. Being in an education or childcare setting with someone who has tested positive for Covid-19 will not necessarily mean a person is identified as a close contact.

You will be asked to provide the contact details, if you know them, of any individuals – or their parents and carers – who have been identified as close contacts. NHS Test and Trace will then get in touch with these close contacts and provide appropriate instructions or advice.

### Self-isolation and/or testing of close contacts

At present, anyone identified as a non-household close contact by NHS Test and Trace must self-isolate until 10 days after the date of their most recent contact with that person. NHS Test and Trace will notify you of the day on which the self-isolation period ends.

Close contacts are also advised to take a PCR test. If the test result is negative, they must still complete the full self-isolation period, as the test will not detect all positive cases. If the result is positive, they will need to self-isolate for a further 10 days – NHS Test and Trace will contact them to identify any close contacts.

If your child gets public transport to school, socially distancing rules and mask wearing has been removed as compulsory, however guidance advises that your child continues to use these preventative measures.

Yours faithfully,



Mike Smith  
Head teacher

