

Riddlesdown Collegiate



29th November 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

COVID-19 Update

Over the last two weeks, we have seen a gradual increase in the number of positive cases amongst students and staff. This is unsurprising, given the national picture and the absence of social restrictions, and is in line with other local schools. However, following concerns over the Omicron variant that has emerged in the last few days, it seems sensible now to remind everyone of the steps that they should be taking:

1. **Lateral Flow Tests (LFTs)** – These have been the best mechanism for identifying asymptomatic positive cases and everyone is encouraged to keep testing at home at least twice per week and more often if there is a particular concern (e.g. someone in the household has symptoms). Anyone who has symptoms or tests positive on a LFT should stay at home, arrange a PCR test as soon as possible and inform us at attendance@riddlesdown.org.
2. **Washing Hands** – Everyone must wash their hands on arrival and should continue to do so regularly throughout the day, using hand sanitiser as an alternative, if necessary. This is especially important before and after eating, e.g. in The Diner or College VI Café.
3. **Ventilation** – By opening windows, classrooms will remain well-ventilated. We recognise that as it gets colder, a balance that also maintains an appropriate room temperature needs to be achieved. This is a challenge with no easy solution, but we shall do our best. An enhanced cleaning programme also remains in place.

In addition, in reviewing our operational arrangements as we head towards Christmas:

4. **Large Gatherings** – We shall temporarily avoid large gatherings, if possible, moving to remote assemblies and staff meetings, for example.
5. **Face Coverings** – The government has now advised that face coverings should be worn by everyone (unless exempt) in indoor communal areas (outside of classrooms, e.g. corridors, Library, College VI Common Room, whilst queuing in The Diner). Face coverings are also required on public transport and in shops.

We now have three weeks until the end of term. I hope that by following these steps, we can help to reduce transmission of the virus, help to keep our community well and minimise the disruption that student and staff absence might otherwise cause. Unless a student is unwell themselves, has symptoms or has tested positive (LFT or PCR), they should continue to attend school as normal. Parents are reminded that visitors without an appointment should not enter the site.

Thank you for your continued support and understanding.

Yours sincerely

Mr S Dey
Principal