



Dear Parents and Carers,

With the end of term upon us I wanted to write a final update. As we know, this has been an unprecedented year but I have been so proud with how the whole school community has worked tirelessly together to still provide a range of opportunities and high-quality education.

Since September, we have had to introduce a number of different procedures to ensure the school is COVID compliant. In many ways I believe we have been very fortunate not to have had any confirmed cases within our student body the term. I am really grateful for all your vigilance and supporting our request to keep students at home who have any symptoms.

As I mentioned in a letter last week, it is still important that you contact us over the Christmas holiday should your child test positive for COVID-19. It may have been that they were symptomatic when they were in school and therefore we would have to get in touch with potential contacts in order to ask them to isolate over the Christmas holiday. If your child does test positive please contact me by email at pskipp@jogschool.org

Below I have included a few updates:

Mass Testing in Secondary Schools

You may have seen the announcement on Tuesday about plans for mass testing in schools. Whilst there is some information out about this, we are currently unaware of the detail. As you can imagine this is going to be a huge logistical challenge, albeit one we will overcome. I have summarised the core proposal in the following points:

- Weekly rapid tests available to all secondary school and college staff from the start of January (unlikely to be from the start of term)
- Staff and students who are close contacts of cases will be eligible for daily testing preventing the need for immediate self-isolation. Only if a daily test returns a positive result will the staff member need to isolate.
- Guidance and training will be available to secondary schools and colleges throughout January so they can start to use the new testing capacity as soon as possible.
- All schools and colleges will be supported to roll out testing as rapidly as possible over the spring term, with daily testing for close contacts available to all staff and students, and regular weekly testing available to staff.
- Test kits will begin arriving at secondary schools and colleges for the first phase of rollout to staff from the first week of January.

Like always, as and when more detail is released I will of course let you all know. I have also provided some further links for reference below:

Guidance - [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) asymptomatic testing in schools and colleges - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Press Release - [Secondary schools and colleges to get weekly coronavirus testing - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Teaching Blog - [Testing in schools – what you need to know - Teaching \(blog.gov.uk\)](#)

Your Questions Answered - [Mass testing in schools: Your questions answered - Education in the media \(blog.gov.uk\)](#)



Carol Concert

Earlier this week was the premiere of our virtual carol concert, I know I am biased but it was brilliant, see below to watch it. <https://www.johnofgauntschool.org/news/?pid=7&nid=1&storyid=40>

Black leather publishable shoes

Just a reminder that our uniform policy is very clear that the only type of shoes that are acceptable to be worn in school are black leather publishable shoes. No type of trainer is acceptable. During the lockdown we did allow some exceptions due to shops being closed, however with shoe shops back open and mail order available this will again be a consistent expectation when we return from Christmas. We are very aware that some may be worried about financial pressures that mean buying new shoes is difficult, please do not worry in silence, we are here to help and would be more than willing to provide assistance. Let us know if we can help.

Returning in January

At the time of writing this letter, all students are set to return on Tuesday 5th January. You may be aware there is some discussion in the news today that there may be a delay to the start of term due to the potential of a third wave of COVID-19 in January and to allow schools to prepare for mass testing. I can assure you at this current time I have no further details, however, rest assured, we are prepared for all eventualities including 'live teaching' over Microsoft Team if necessary. I will of course keep you informed, however, as it stands currently, all students will return on Tuesday 5th January.

Finally

Thank you! It is a real pleasure to work with our students and such supportive families. This term has been a bit of a marathon in many ways but I am really proud of how our school has coped and still maintained our high expectations.

I wish you all a really relaxing and safe Christmas holiday,

Kind regards,

Paul Skipp
Headteacher