



Dear Parents and Carers,

4th January 2022

Happy New Year to you all, I hope that the festive season has been good for you.

I wanted to write a short message to you as we begin the start of the term to make sure that we are up to date with changes in expectations in schools in response to COVID.

An additional measure that has been enforced nationally in response to the OMICRON strain is that students are expected to wear masks in classrooms for the first few weeks of term. This will be reviewed by the Government on 26th January.

For us this will mean that students are asked to put their masks on at their morning muster and will wear masks when moving around school and in their lessons. At breaktimes and lunchtimes they can remove masks when sitting down eating inside and they do not need to wear masks outside in their breaktime areas.

Some students are exempt from mask wearing. If your child is in this category they should wear an exemption lanyard - I know some students have their own sunflower lanyards, which they are welcome to wear and some will have lanyards from last time we used them in school. If your child needs a lanyard provided please contact their achievement leader who will arrange this.

Year 7 Mr Bonas KBonas@castlemanor.org.uk
Year 8 Miss Towers LTowers@castlemanor.org.uk
Year 9 Mrs Plunkett CPlunkett@castlemanor.org.uk
Year 10 Mr Sims NSims@castlemanor.org.uk
Year 11 Miss Bushell RBushell@castlemanor.org.uk

We have our testing day on Wednesday. There is a slight change to this in that anyone who has had COVID in the past 90 days can now be tested as long as their isolation period has finished. So please can those who had it in the Autumn term attend testing in school. I have attached the schedule so that you can look at timings. If there are any problems with times we will be as flexible as we can - please just contact Miss Cassels on LCassels@castlemanor.org.uk

If your child tests positive either at school or at home please record the result on www.testregister.co.uk so that we can track. I have also attached a flow chart of how to respond to positive lateral flow tests which may be helpful. A confirmation PCR test should be carried out within 48 hours of the positive lateral flow. We are aware of test shortages, and we do have stocks of LFT tests for regular twice per week testing and we also have postal PCR tests. Please contact Mrs Byrne on RByrne@castlemanor.org.uk if you need support with this. Our stocks will change over time but we will do our very best to support you.

If your child is off awaiting PCR results or has a confirmed positive we will set work for them to complete if they feel well enough. This will be on go for schools daily.

Unity Schools Partnership is a charitable company limited by guarantee and registered in England and Wales with company number 07400386. The registered office is at Unity SP Offices, Park Road, Haverhill, Suffolk, CB9 7YD.

Headteacher: Mrs. Vanessa Whitcombe



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Nationally isolation guidance has changed and this is the case for schools too. If your child tests positive you can do lateral flow tests on day 6 and 7 of isolation. If these are negative then your child can return to school on day 8. Two negative lateral flow tests in a row after day 6 can trigger this early return too - so for example on day 7 and 8 or day 8 and 9.

We are committed to retaining in school education as much as possible and will be creative around this where we need to by merging classes together if needed. We are also very much aware that we are entering an unknown period in terms of cases and transmission. If we need to make decisions to have any learning moving to remote learning we will let you know as soon as possible and will restrict to classes/yeargroups and will look at rotas if needed. There will always be provision in school for any students who are children of key workers and those who are considered vulnerable. We will communicate more about our remote or hybrid learning plans once we see what the start of term looks like. We will also send out another online survey to gauge which students may need support with borrowing laptops or tablets if needed.

I know that this time may be a time of anxiety for you depending on your individual family circumstances. If you want to talk to us about anything please do get in touch on VWhitcombe@castlemanor.org.uk

I want to also remind you that we still have in school various measures to mitigate transmission of COVID, and these have been really positive in their impact with so far very low levels of suspected transmission in school.

1. Ventilation - please do encourage wearing of 'underlayers' to keep warm.
2. CO2 monitors - these are showing us our airflow is generally very good in our classrooms.
3. Regular cleaning including wiping down at the end of each lesson.
4. Regular hand sanitising.
5. Mask wearing.

One of the things I have learned over the past nearly two years of leading our school during COVID is that our community support each other and face things together. I am not too sure how the next few weeks will turn out, but we face them together and gain strength from that. Thank you all for your continued support and for working closely with us.

With best wishes for 2022.

Vanessa Whitcombe
Headteacher

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