

7th January 2022

Dear Parents,

Happy New Year! I hope you had a good Christmas, although I suspect some of you were affected by the Omicron variant and will have had your plans disrupted. Hopefully 2022 will bring better and brighter things.

Sheldon Lateral Flow Testing

The first week back here has gone well, spurred on by a phenomenal start on Tuesday when all students returned and all in Years 7 to 11 with consent were lateral flow tested. I would like to thank you for your fantastic support in responding to our electronic form – over 1200 returns came in, revealing 18 positive LFD results, which gave us great confidence in running the school safely from day 1. On the day itself in school, just one case came back positively. I would also like to pay tribute to the team of volunteers who have now become quite expert in the testing process who worked solidly throughout Tuesday to ensure that we were all done in one day and therefore could get on completely normally on Wednesday.

Revisions to rules

Related to this, you will be aware that there have been several revisions to rules around self-isolation since we broke up for Christmas. From 22nd December, the self-isolation period was reduced from 10 to 7 days following a positive PCR result, provided that LFD results show two negatives on days 6 and 7 (taken at least 24 hours apart). In addition, if no symptoms are showing, then anyone in this position can return to school. Further information, including examples of when to end self-isolation if you have had COVID-19 symptoms, is available in the [stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed COVID-19 infection](#). As I wrote in my last letter of the year, students are strongly encouraged to continue testing twice weekly at home and to [report all results to NHS Test and Trace](#) and to their setting. We will be issuing further LFD testing kits as soon as they are delivered to school and these kits are for the use of students at Sheldon School only. LFD tests should only be used for individuals who are asymptomatic. From Tuesday 11th January, if a positive result is obtained by an LFD there is no longer a requirement to book a follow up PCR; however, the isolation rules are those as outlined above.

Vaccination programme for 12-15 year-olds

You may be aware that young people aged 12 to 15 in England are now being offered a second dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine at a minimum of 12 weeks from the first dose, following advice from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI).

Parents can book vaccinations for their child, if aged 12 or over, through the [NHS booking system](#) at one of the mass vaccination centres, with plenty of capacity outside school hours. Schools are likely to be approached as centres themselves for this process later in the year, but if you wish your child to have a second dose, it would help keep disruption in school to a minimum if this were organised privately. We will of course provide the facility to those parents who wish this to be done at Sheldon once we are approached by the relevant health care provider.

Hardenhuish Lane, Chippenham, Wilts. SN14 6HJ

Headteacher: Neil Spurdell BSc (Hons)

Tel: 01249 766020 **Fax:** 01249 766030

Email: admin@sheldonschool.co.uk **Web:** www.sheldonschool.co.uk

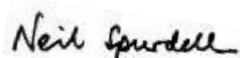


Public examinations and assessments

Today we have received news from the DfE that even though the government has made it mandatory for all students to wear face coverings in classrooms this term (to be reviewed 26th January), the guidance sets out that we would not ordinarily expect candidates and invigilators to wear face coverings during exams and assessments – just on arrival and departure. Candidates and invigilators may wear face coverings if they wish to do so. With internal assessments on the horizon for Year 11 and Year 13 students, as well as some public examinations scheduled for next week, this will be reassuring news for those who do not want to sit their exams or assessments wearing a mask for the duration.

I remain very optimistic about the year ahead and that as the year progresses, we will be talking less and less about Covid. Certainly, in my next correspondence, I will be keen to talk about the many other good things that are happening around the school.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Neil Spurdell". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line at the end.

Neil Spurdell
Headteacher