



14 December 2021

Rachel Hutchinson  
Principal

Dear Parent/Carer

## **NHS Test and Trace: Department of Education approved staggered return to College**

On Saturday, 27 November, the Prime Minister announced new temporary measures following the emergence of the Omicron variant of COVID-19 in the UK. Subsequently, the Department for Education provided guidance for school leaders on 30 November which has asked all secondary schools to carry out on-site COVID-19 lateral flow testing for students at the start of the Spring Term. Please see the latest government guidance which can be found [here](#)

You will appreciate that on-site testing is a considerable logistical and time-consuming challenge for any school. In order to facilitate this requirement, staff will need to be released from their normal duties in order to support the administration of the tests, therefore reducing capacity across the College. Whilst on-site testing is very disruptive, we understand that the safety of our College community is our main priority, and we must do all we can to support the reduction of the transmission of COVID-19 to students and staff. Therefore, we have considered how best to complete this, whilst also mitigating any disruption to learning for our students.

Consequently, we will need to stagger the January return to College in order to facilitate testing on-site. Students who are required to engage in Remote Learning from home at the start of the Spring Term will follow their normal timetable and be taught live lessons by their usual subject teachers via MS Teams. All students will receive a session in Tutor time on Tuesday or Wednesday this week on 'how to access live lessons on Microsoft Teams' to support this period of Remote Learning. A version of this information will also be recorded and shared on the College website in order that parents/carers can support the process.

Your child's return date for face-to-face teaching is outlined in the table below:

### **Staggered return week commencing Tuesday, 4 January 2022**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Year Group returning to College for COVID-19 testing</b>	<b>Year Groups having face to face lessons on-site</b>	<b>Year Groups having Remote Learning from home</b>
Tuesday, 4 January	11, 13	11, 13,	7, 8, 9, 10, 12
Wednesday, 5 January	7, 12	7, 11, 12, 13	8, 9, 10
Thursday, 6 January	8, 10	7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13	9
Friday, 7 January	9	All Year Groups back to College	None

Additionally, the following groups will be required to return on Tuesday, 4 January regardless of their Year Group. The families of those students will be contacted in advance:

- Vulnerable students
- Students with an EHCP
- Students with Social Worker involvement

All students are strongly advised to carry out a lateral flow test within 24 hours of returning to College, even if participating in the on-site testing.

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Testing continues to play a vital role in keeping COVID-19 out of schools. After the on-site test on return, students should continue to test in line with government guidelines.

**NHS Test and Trace: Consent for COVID-19 Testing at Ivybridge Community College**

In order to be able to test students on-site we will be writing to you again in the coming days to request consent. Those students who are aged 16 and over will be required to complete their own consent for testing. Without completing the consent form, regardless of any previous consent which may have been given, students will not be tested.

When we return in the New Year we will be requiring that ALL students and staff continue to wear face masks in ALL communal areas (unless in the exempt group). This also includes the Sixth Form study areas where there are large numbers of students in close proximity.

Please note, we will continue to post any government updates on the College website over the Christmas period and if there are any adjustments that may impact on our 'return to College arrangements' we will notify parents/carers as soon as possible through our website and normal lines of communication.

Finally, we would like to take this opportunity to thank all parents/carers, students and staff for their continued support during this pandemic. Please help us to keep everyone safe and continue to contact the College if we can be of any further support in your child's education.

Yours sincerely

Rachel Hutchinson  
**Principal**