

16th December 2021

Dear Parents / Carers,

As we approach the end of term, I am writing to update you on arrangements for the start of the new term in January.

We all recognise the uncertainty facing the country at the moment and that the next few weeks are critical regarding how the country responds to the Omicron variant. I am concerned that over the Christmas holidays, guidance on the running of schools during the pandemic will change. It is clear that the government feel that no measures or restrictions are “off the table”, in an attempt to stop the NHS from becoming overwhelmed. I am taking the view that the school needs to be ready to operate under several scenarios. These could be summarised as follows –

1. Schools continue to run as they have this term.
2. Schools stay open but with the re-introduction of class bubbles.
3. Schools close and there is a school wide move to remote learning.
4. Schools are open but some pupils are asked to remote learn at home due to staffing shortages.

I feel it would be very unlikely for schools to close again, but as the new variant spreads, it is likely that disruption in staffing levels and also pupil attendance will occur. This draws me to the conclusion that we need to be ready to work and learn in a more flexible way over the next term.

We have already requested fresh consent regarding pupils taking a lateral flow test (LFT) at school. For this to be effective when we return in January, it is vital that nearly all pupils undertake a test on-site before they return. **Many thanks for the hundreds of parents that have already consented.** For those yet to consent, please complete the consent form which can be found by clicking the link at the very top of our website. I would appreciate it if this request could be shared by parents on social media. The school intends to test all pupils before their return to lessons. **It would be very much appreciated, if parents could consent before the holidays, so that school can prepare for the consented numbers before the school closes for Christmas.**

In order for the school to be safe and ready for any scenario, Tuesday 4th January 2022 will run as follows.

1. Pupils must not arrive before their directed time to attend the school site for testing.



2. **Pupils will be dismissed after completing their LFT to complete online learning for the rest of the day.** Details of how to access this work will be shared in advance. Parents of younger pupils may wish to drop off/pick up their child from school.
3. If necessary, pupils without a laptop/device at home, will be provided with one by school, should there be any contingency whereby pupils have to remote learn over the coming weeks. Please contact school as soon as possible if your child requires one for access to work on Tuesday 4th January 2022. Please contact via telephone 0114 234 8805 or via email enquiries@forgevalley.sheffield.sch.uk

Pupils should attend at the following times:

Year Group	Time	Report to	Collection point for laptops if needed	Remote Learning
7	9.00 – 9.45am	Rear of Gymnasium building	Main pupil reception	Can be accessed using link found on the school website Homepage
8	9.45 – 10.45am	Rear of Gymnasium building	Main pupil reception	Can be accessed using link found on the school website Homepage
9	10.45 – 11.45am	Rear of Gymnasium building	Main pupil reception	Can be accessed using link found on the school website Homepage
10	12.30 – 1.30pm	Rear of Gymnasium building	Main pupil reception	Can be accessed using link found on the school website Homepage
11	1.30 – 2.30pm	Rear of Gymnasium building	Main pupil reception	Can be accessed using link found on the school website Homepage
12 and 13	9.00 – 10.00am	Main Hall using the Sensory Garden doors	Main pupil reception	Work will be emailed

My aim of running the 4th January as outlined above is to provide assurance to the whole school community that the school is safe. However, this depends on parents consenting for a LFT to be taken on-site. It provides certainty to parents regarding what is happening on the 4th rather than being told the night before because guidance has changed during the holidays. Finally, it allows time for staff to put in place preparations, should the school have to move to some form of remote education.

I am certain that pulling together as a community and getting as many pupils tested as possible, will help keep everybody safe.

The school will communicate with parents again on the 3rd of January. Hopefully confirming that the above is still in place!

I close, by wishing you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

All staff at Forge Valley School feel very well supported by you all and want to do the absolute best for your child. It remains a privilege to be the Headteacher at Forge Valley School.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D Barrowclough', written over a white rectangular background.

Mr D Barrowclough
Headteacher