

Alcester Academy

Headteacher: Mrs Sarah Mellors
Deputy Headteacher: Mrs Wendy Woodman



Assistant Headteacher: Miss Karen Buckthorp
Assistant Headteacher: Mr Nick Cooke

7th January 2022

Dear Parents/Carers

Good afternoon. As it has been a slightly different start to term, I'm updating you on a few areas by letter rather than a bulletin. The bulletin will return next week hopefully.

It's been an interesting week in the news with various briefings and changes to new rules regarding covid. As ever, the students have responded with maturity and complete understanding. They take things in their stride now and adapt as needed. I'm very proud of them. Thank you for co-operating with the staggered start also to allow for the lateral flow tests. We discovered just one potentially positive case by doing this and so I'm indebted to you for your rigor checking at home.

Our staff test team have been amazing this week yet again. What would we do without them! This round has included our invigilators as testers; Ronnie, Margaret and Sarah. Huge thanks to everyone involved.

Further to my start of term letter on Monday, there have been changes to the isolation rules now as follows:

'Individuals may now take LFD tests on day 6 and day 7 of their self-isolation period. Those who receive two negative test results are no longer required to complete 10 full days of self-isolation. The first test must be taken no earlier than day 6 of the self-isolation period and tests must be taken 24 hours apart. This also applies to children under 5, with LFD testing at parental or guardian discretion. If both these test results are negative, and you do not have a high temperature, you may end your self-isolation after the second negative test result and return to your education or childcare setting from day 7.'

This contradicts the information that I sent out on Monday, and I can only apologise and keep you updated as the information changes. The key take-away from this is that isolation can end on day 7 if there have been 2 negative LFT early on day 6 and then early on day 7 (24 hours apart). Children can return to school on day 7.

Presently we will not be asking for evidence of a negative day 6 and 7 test. This is just too much to manage on a daily basis. There is therefore a trust that I am asking of you again in order to ensure that we keep the community as safe as possible. Please do not send students back to school unless they have received those two, critical negative results.

You'll be aware also that the need to PCR test is also changing from Tuesday 11th January.



‘Confirmatory PCR tests following a positive lateral flow device (LFD) test result are to be temporarily suspended from Tuesday 11 January. This will mean that anyone who receives a positive LFD test result will be required to self-isolate immediately and will not be required to take a confirmatory PCR test.’

Covid case numbers (as of today)

- Y7: 1 positive
- Y8: 4 positives
- Y9: 4 positives
- Y10: 1 positive
- Y11: 3 positives

I am obliged to let you know of cases within the school. There is a standard letter template used to do this, but I will continue to provide the statistics each Tuesday and Friday for you so that you can maintain vigilance as parents instead. I would be sending you the letter on a daily basis otherwise and I’m certain that this would be frustrating for you. If there is a concerning spike, I will address this with you as needed after seeking advice from the appropriate professionals.

So far, thankfully, our staff team have not been affected this term greatly. I thank them for their vigilance.

LFT kits

We are aware that LFT kits are in short supply, and we have ordered again to try and distribute another box to each student. Hopefully, this won’t take too long to get out to you.

Second vaccine for students

Thank you to a loyal parent for highlighting that we are now twelve weeks clear of the first vaccination conducted in school in October. You may wish to try and obtain a second dose therefore and I am aware of how accommodating the Alcester walk-in centre has been behind the National School Wear Centre. Please consider taking your child in order to avoid waiting for news on a second school date. I have heard nothing yet about this.

Bus Transport

We are already aware that one operator is struggling with staffing issues, and this might well impair the service for children temporarily. Please can I ask you to begin considering a contingency for getting your child to school if the transport cannot run due to covid reasons. Thank you.

Trips-Covid-19

We are keen to ensure that any trips that continue run are safe to do so. We will update you on an individual basis as needed.

Whole school assembly

We have held a whole school assembly today on the ‘back to school’ updates required with students. Please can you ensure that students who ride to school on a scooter or a cycle have a helmet on from Monday (as per my request prior to the break).

We have completed uniform checks today.

Miss Buckthorp

Miss Buckthorp is now back full time and can be contacted as needed. Thank you for your support during her recent absence.

Year 11 Parents' Evening

Thank you to parents/carers for joining us last night via School Cloud. Congratulations to Year 11s on receiving their mock results this week. Spring interventions are currently being planned and we will write to you with details of these. Would you believe that the second round of mocks are just 6 school weeks away starting on 28th February 2022?

Year 10 exams

We wish Year 10s the best of luck for exams next week. Please ensure that they have the equipment needed and a face covering. We move to 3:2 days as a result of these.

We will allow a trip hoody or PE sweatshirt to be worn in the hall in light of the cold weather if students haven't got a school jumper. I suggest a t-shirt, underneath a school shirt might also be advised.

Poor weather update

In light of the drastic drop in temperature over the last couple of days, it is prudent to remind you of the arrangements for a school closure if required due to snow. I have liaised with St Benedict's and AGS and a local agreement will be discussed in this circumstance. Hopefully this will help transport. If we should decide to close the school, you will be notified via a text message. Please therefore ensure that we have accurate details for you. This will be further supported via Facebook, Twitter and local radio, as well as the website home page.

Learning for students will be posted on to Google Classroom and students should follow their normal lesson timetable for that day. Long gone are our traditional 'snow days'!

For new parents/carers it is worth adding that we close only on a very rare occasion. The condition of the main roads will be assessed before making any decision. We aim to do this as early as we can in the morning in order to avoid unnecessary travel.

Vacancy

We are currently looking for a science technician. Details can be found on the school website.

Liv's Angels

Thank you again if you sponsored an angel for Liv's charities. Liv's parents, Sharon and Matt would be very glad to keep the angels in Liv's memory unless you want your personal angel. Please let me know by Friday next week if you would like to have your sponsored angel returned to you otherwise, I will make this kind donation.

Between the non-uniform day at the end of term, and selling or sponsoring angels, we raised a staggering £1490.58 for Asthma UK and Red Wings Horse Sanctuary. Thank you all.

I appreciate that there is a lot of information to take in right now. I'll do my best to keep you updated and as always, the safety of the children and staff is my key priority.

If you need to clarify anything, please contact the school. Wishing you a relaxing and safe weekend. We send our best wishes to those families affected by covid right now.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Mellors'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'S' and a distinct 'M'.

Sarah Mellors
Headteacher