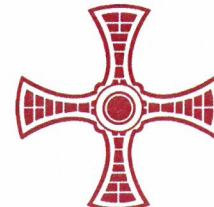


St Robert of Newminster Catholic School and Sixth Form College

Biddick Lane, Washington, Tyne & Wear, NE38 8AF
Tel: (0191) 716 1700 Email: school@str.bwcet.com



Head Teacher: Mr. D. Juric
Chair of Governors: Mr. G. Moorhouse

26th February 2021

Dear Parents/Carers

I am writing to you to explain the process for student Covid testing when they return to school. There are many other things of which to inform you also, but for the sake of clarity I will be addressing this issue only in this letter and will write to you further on other matters next week.

The testing of over 1600 young people on a school site, three times each within a short space of time, is a massive undertaking and one which has no easy solution. In our deliberations about how to approach this task two major considerations were at the core. Firstly, we want to minimise as much as possible the chances of having to send students home as close contacts of positive cases before they have even started back at school. While it is impossible to eliminate this risk entirely, a system which involves limited number of students on site together in the beginning limits this eventuality. Secondly, while we of course need to conduct the testing efficiently, effectively and safely, we do also want to have all students back in the classroom as swiftly as possible.

In order to try to satisfy these two priorities and to comply with government guidelines we have decided to proceed as follows:

Friday 5th March

Students in Years 7 and 8 will come into school to be tested. All other year groups will be at home, but critical worker/vulnerable children may still attend school.

Monday 8th March

Students in Years 11, 12 and some Year 13 will come into school to be tested. All other year groups will be at home, but critical worker/vulnerable children may still attend school.

Tuesday 9th March

Students in Years 9, 10 and the remaining Year 13 will come into school to be tested. All other year groups will be at home, but critical worker/vulnerable children may still attend school.

We will send out 1 hour arrival windows on Monday next week to all year groups, which students must stick to please. Students should arrive for their test and then must leave once their result is processed. We anticipate them being on site for approximately one hour, but it may be up to 90 minutes.

Students should not use the school bus, as there is the risk of creating close contacts. On site students must maintain a 2 metre distance from others, and must wear a face mask. All students should be in full uniform. Only those students whose parents/carers have given consent via the form sent out electronically should attend. **You must not attend if you are displaying symptoms of Covid, or are isolating due to receiving a positive Covid test, being identified as a contact of a positive test by NHS Test and Trace, or due to a period of household Covid isolation.**



Parents/Carers may wait on site in their vehicles in the visitors' car park if they wish, whilst the testing takes place, but are not permitted to accompany their child into school.

We will inform parents/carers of any positive tests as immediately as possible by telephone, and your child will have to be collected. We will not inform parents of negative results and your child will be allowed to leave the site straightaway. You should also expect to be informed via NHS Test and Trace of the outcome within 24 hours by email.

As stated above, individual 1 hour test windows will be issued on Monday next week, when we know exactly how many students have signed up. However, for information at this point:

Friday 5th March

Year 7 will be Friday morning

Year 8 will be Friday afternoon

Monday 8th March

Year 12 will be Monday morning

Year 11 will be Monday afternoon

Year 13 will be morning or afternoon, as directed by their appointment window.

Tuesday 9th March

Year 9 & 13 will be Tuesday morning

Year 10 will be Tuesday afternoon

Please also note that **if your child has received a positive Covid test within the previous 90 days, they are exempt from testing at present and should not attend for testing.**

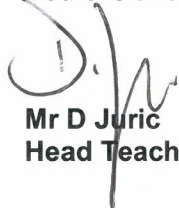
Wednesday 10th March

All students (other than any who tested positive) return to school and are able to attend full lessons.

During the next two weeks, students will have their second and third in school tests on a rota basis – details will follow. After the third in school test, students will then commence home testing with kits provided by the school. We shall give you further information on this nearer the time.

We appreciate that this process will require a level of effort and we thank you in advance. We do implore you to keep to your appointment window. These three full days of bulk testing will minimise the chances of contact tracing for positive cases, and will allow the swiftest possible recommencement of learning in school for all students. We thank you for your cooperation with us in making this happen. Further information around routines, safety measures, etc. will follow, as stated above.

Yours faithfully



Mr D Juric
Head Teacher