



# Malbank School and Sixth Form College



*Rejoice in being the best that we  
can be*

## Return to School January 2022

Good evening,

I hope everyone at Malbank and all members of our extended school family have had a lovely Christmas holiday and that the students have had a restful break.

As I promised before the Christmas holidays, I am writing to you today to share the most up to date guidance and information regarding covid and to explain the impact this will have when we all return to school next week.

You may have seen in the news that national information has been released relating to some changes to the things we have to put in place to help keep one another safe at school. As a result of the rise in cases nationally, the government today announced that until January the 26th, students are to wear masks in classrooms as an additional precaution to help stop the spread of the Omicron variant. In simple terms, for our students, this means they are to wear a mask (unless exempt) at all times in the building. This means classrooms, corridors, before being seated in the canteen and in the toilets. As was the case before the holidays, we expect students to come to school with their own mask – whilst we have a stock of masks in school, students should bring their own and only require one from us if it is misplaced during the day.

The confusing element for parents in Cheshire east is that the current national guidance asking contacts of a positive case to complete 7 days of LFTs (Lateral Flow Tests) has been overridden by the local authority public health team. As it stands, Students who are a household contact should isolate for 5 days, they should then return to school and complete LFTs until all isolation in the home for positive cases is complete. I appreciate that this deviation from national advice may be confusing, but in the run up to Christmas, the local authority felt that it had a significant impact on reducing case spread in our community. They plan to review this policy after the first two weeks back.

Finally, you will be aware that on the first day back, all consenting students will be expected to complete a lateral flow test in school. This again is to reduce the possibility of Covid coming into school after the two-week break. Can I ask first that all students complete one of their twice weekly tests on Tuesday night before returning to school on Wednesday (a reminder that Tuesday is a longstanding INSET day at Malbank). Test results should be uploaded to the school system found at [bit.ly/MalCV19results](https://www.gov.uk/report-covid19-result) and the NHS website: <https://www.gov.uk/report-covid19-result>

Students returning on Wednesday will complete a test at some point during the day with us. Unlike in the past when students were held in a waiting area, were tested by staff, and then waited in a separate area, given that they are now so accustomed to testing, students in each year group will all test at the same time in the sports hall. They will be sat at a designated desk (there will be an exam style seating plan) and will be taken through the process via a video and guidance on their desk. Like last time we did mass testing on return and because it is a little different – I have recorded a new video to allay any fears about what the students will face which can be found here: <https://www.loom.com/share/a728a1194800489ca7491835907d94ea>

Any students worried about this process should have no concerns as we have also set up a separate room for students who are anxious about the process and need a little more support.

The only thing to add is that previously, students who had tested positive for COVID in the last 90 days did not have to test during these sessions, however the government have now said that all students who have consented

regardless of if and how long ago they have had COVID should test. (Unfortunately, as I filmed the video before this change in policy – I mention the old 90-day rule in the video – please ignore this).

Many thanks for taking the time to read about the plans for our return and the subtle changes that we have to make as a school. Most importantly, I am very excited to see our staff and students back at school doing what we do best – learning together. Whilst we may have to wear masks upon return which I know many will not like, it is a small sacrifice to make to be able to learn in the way we all love – face to face.

Have a great final few days and I look forward to seeing everyone back on Wednesday.

Yours,

Mr Harrison

Headteacher: John D. Harrison B.A. (Hons.)

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