



St Augustine's RC High School



Newsletter
December 2021



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Dear families,

With the Christmas holiday rapidly approaching I would like to take the opportunity to thank you for your ongoing support this term and wish you every blessing for the festive season. I would also like to clarify a number of important points following the government's "Plan B" in light of the rapid spread of the Omicron variant.

Attendance remains compulsory for all pupils with continued education a national priority. Pupils will only be granted leave of absence in exceptional circumstances.

Face coverings are required in all communal areas and we are grateful for the support of families in ensuring pupils attend school with a mask (and a spare!). There are currently no plans to re-introduce masks in classrooms.

Testing - pupils are encouraged to continue with twice weekly lateral flow tests. A positive result should be followed up with a PCR test. We are awaiting the next delivery of testing kits and hope to be able to distribute packs for the holiday.

All adults who are fully vaccinated and children aged 5 to 18 years and 6 months, identified as a contact of someone with COVID-19 – whether Omicron or not – should take a lateral flow device (LFD) test every day for 7 days instead of self-isolating. Schools are required to have outbreak plans with contingencies in place for larger number of confirmed cases, including partial closure and online learning for isolating groups. Pupils will take a **supervised lateral flow test** on their return to school in January. Existing consent for testing will be carried forward or [click here](#) to consent. Please ensure your child is aware of your wishes.

Events - we have recently taken the decision to limit visitors to school; the Carol Service and end of term Mass will be virtual events and we were sorry to have to cancel our leavers' Celebration Evening. We now expect that **parents' evenings** will take place online (via School Cloud) for the rest of the academic year.

The Department for Education states that **GCSE examinations** are still expected to take place in May / June 2022. A contingency plan based on Teacher Assessed Grades is in place.

Free School Meals

Families with pupils eligible for Free School Meals will be receiving a food voucher through the post to cover the Christmas period.

Uniform Matters

Please ensure that on return from the Christmas holiday, appearance and uniform are in line with the school policy. Following discussions with the Pupil Council and with Governing Body approval, hair should now be no shorter than a “number 2” (previously “3”). If this rule is abused and pupils arrive in school with very short / shaved hair or “skin fades”, then the “number 3” rule will be re-established. Hair should be one natural colour with no extreme styles. False nails, eyelashes and other adornments are not allowed. If you are unsure of any of these rules please check before making any changes.

Coats

With the likelihood of cold and wet weather next term, please ensure that pupils are wearing appropriate school coats. We ask that coats are a plain colour and without obvious designer logos. Shower proof coats provide the best protection against the elements and we would discourage the recent fashion for “fluffy” coats which absorb water and increase humidity in the building when pupils come inside. Hoodies, denim and leather (look) jackets are not allowed. Scarves, gloves and hats may be worn in cold weather.

Footwear

Plain, black school shoes should be worn. Please do not buy black trainers, even if they are marketed by the shoe shop as a school shoe. Suede and canvas shoes should not be worn.

Face Coverings

All pupils must wear face coverings in communal areas in school and on school buses. We are advising pupils to bring a spare mask as many of the disposable type tend to break with use. Those with medical exemption should wear their lanyards so they can be clearly seen. Pupils who repeatedly fail to bring / wear a mask will receive sanctions.

Smart Watches

We understand that these are a popular Christmas present but they can be a distraction in class so are not allowed in school.

Nut Free School

A reminder that we are a nut free school to ensure the safety of our students. Although we recognise that we cannot guarantee an environment that is completely free from any allergen, we believe that a nut free policy minimises the risk for pupils with nut allergies.



Adios to Mrs Douglas!

We say farewell to Mrs Douglas who takes up a new role closer to home in Yorkshire from next term. We wish her well for the future and welcome Miss Janigova to the staff.





Mental Health in School

Earlier this term we welcomed “Here at Last” into school, a very popular band with over 1 million followers online. Having all had their own issues with cyber bullying and mental health, the band members delivered a positive message to pupils as well as playing some of their hits. Our thanks to families and pupils who completed the mental health and wellbeing survey that was issued in November; the results will inform our plans for next term.

Sponsored Walk

We were delighted with the response to our annual sponsored walk with family and friends digging deep to raise nearly £11,000 for school funds and year group charities. While we were not able to complete our usual route around Whalley and Billington, pupils did enjoy a sunny walk with the beautiful Ribble Valley scenery as a backdrop.



Y9 Options

Year 9 pupils will be considering their option choices for GCSE and other Key Stage 4 courses next term. Teachers will be giving talks on the qualifications available in their own subject areas and pupils will be given information about new courses that are available in Year 10. We hope to be able to invite families into school for an options information talk on 19th January, subject to any Covid restrictions, and may offer two sessions (5.00pm and 6.30pm) to allow for social distancing in the hall. More information will follow next term.

Christmas Raffle

Many thanks for supporting the PTFA Raffle that was drawn on 13th December.

First Prize - Ticket 06778 - Vanessa Haworth - £250.00

Second - Ticket 00113 - John Leaver - £100.00

Third - Ticket 00976—Catherine Duxbury - £50.00

Fourth - Ticket 04168 - J Powton - Prize

Fifth - Ticket 03812 - Barry Counsell - Prize

**Look out for the first Safeguarding Newsletter
that will be issued before Christmas**

Merry Christmas!

