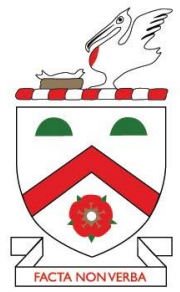


FRED LONGWORTH HIGH SCHOOL



December 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

I write to you as we approach the end of the Autumn Term 2021. Whilst we still have to face many challenges as a result of Covid, this has been a successful term and there has, in the main, been a sense of a return to normal school life.

Firstly, may I say thank you for supporting the school throughout the term. In comparison to the last 18 months, it has been a real pleasure to see the students in lessons again with minimal disruption due to periods of isolation. It has also been fantastic to see the resumption of so much of our extra-curricular offer and so many students involved in clubs and activities after school and during lunchtimes. One of the key highlights this term has been the successful Winmarleigh trips for students in both Year 7 and Year 8.

I am pleased to inform you that Fred Longworth High School has had one of the highest uptakes in Wigan of students choosing to receive the immunisation against COVID and we have seen the impact of this in the number of cases amongst students in school; however, we must not become complacent. Whilst we are fortunate to have had a relatively low number of COVID cases in our school (some schools have unfortunately experienced over 200 children at a time having to isolate) we must remain vigilant and I ask for your continued support and cooperation with our Covid measures. The new Omicron strain is obviously a concern to us all and we will be monitoring how this situation evolves and its potential impact on school in the New Year.

The Director of Public Health for Wigan has now instructed schools to maintain the wearing of face coverings in communal areas until February half term. This is for staff, students and visitors to school unless exempt. Once we return to school in January it is particularly important to maintain the routine of regular testing each Wednesday and Sunday. **Prior to returning to school in January, can I ask all students to take a home test on Monday 3rd January.** Please report any positive results to covid@flhs.wigan.sch.uk.

On-Site Testing in January

As well as encouraging home testing and the wearing of face coverings, schools have also been asked to conduct one on-site LFT test for all students upon their return to school after the Christmas Holiday. Unfortunately, this will lead to a staggered and disrupted start to the term. I can only apologise for this inconvenience but it is a requirement.

Students will return to school on Tuesday 4th January, they must come into school at the following times:

- 8:35: – **Year 11** to arrive in school, they must go straight to the Sports Hall and take their LFT test. Once a negative result is confirmed, they will proceed to lessons
- 9:55: – **Year 10** to arrive in school, they must go straight to the Sports Hall and take their LFT test. Once a negative result is confirmed, they will proceed to lessons
- 11:15: – **Year 7** to arrive in school, they must go straight to the Sports Hall and take their LFT test. Once a negative result is confirmed, they will proceed to lessons

- 12:15: – **Year 8** to arrive in school, they must go straight to the Sports Hall and take their LFT test. Once a negative result is confirmed, they will proceed to lessons
- 1:45: – **Year 9** to arrive in school, they must go straight to the Sports Hall and take their LFT test. Once a negative result is confirmed, they will proceed to lessons.

Students who have a positive test result will be sent home immediately and parents will need to arrange a confirmatory PCR test. The student will need to isolate for 10 days unless the PCR test is negative. **I cannot stress enough the importance of taking the home test on Monday 3rd January. This will help to identify any possible cases and will help to prevent further transmission as students come into the school building on the 4th January.**

Consent for On-Site Testing

We have maintained all consent records from the previous rounds of testing carried out in school. If you have not given consent for your child to be tested, your child will need to come into school at the allocated time for their year group and not before.

Daily Testing of Close Contacts

From the 14th December [the national guidance for close contacts](#) recommends that 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. If they test negative, they can continue to attend school. This approach will continue on our return to school in January. If an individual tests positive, they should self-isolate and order a PCR test to confirm the result. If the PCR is positive, they must self-isolate for 10 days. If the PCR test is negative, they no longer need to self-isolate but should continue to carry out the remainder of the daily tests, and only need to isolate if it is positive.

Uniform Standards

The standard of uniform so far this year has been very good. The new dresses for Year 7 look incredibly smart and I'll take this opportunity to remind parents that as of September 2022, the new dress (or trousers) will be expected for all female students. Our suppliers are no longer selling the old style school skirts. As a school we want to encourage students to take pride in their professional appearance and I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for helping support this at home. I have also noticed recently that a number of students are coming to school without a coat, I would recommend that students do bring a coat to school for their comfort.

School Performances and School Events

Where possible we have tried to open up the school for as many public events as possible. We have to work closely with public health officials when planning events in school and this inevitably leads to some restrictions being put in place, and regrettably in some cases, cancellation. As we enter into 2022, we will continue to plan to hold performances, showcase events and face-to-face parents' evenings in school but we will need to monitor the situation carefully.

National information about Vaping

As a school we are increasingly concerned about the number of students who have started to vape. This follows national concerns about the increase of vaping in young adults and its negative side effects such as addiction, lung concerns and possible burns due to them exploding at times. It is important that parents and carers speak to their children about this issue. It is also important to highlight that the way vaping is marketed can be misleading, often vaping paraphernalia is designed (some look like highlighters and stationery) to be child-friendly rather than harmful and illegal for

under-age children. Further advice can be found [here](#) in a BBC article about a teenager who was severely harmed from vaping. We are also addressing this issue through our PSHE programme and assemblies. If we find evidence of students vaping in school, vapes and associated paraphernalia will be confiscated and not returned. **These items are forbidden in school.**

Attendance

It is important that we remind families that students are not allowed to take holidays in school hours and term time periods. More, now than ever, it is imperative that students do not miss school and precious learning time. I must be clear that schools are unable to authorise any holiday in school hours.

Foreign Travel Over the Christmas Holidays

Due to the Omicron strain of the virus, government guidance on foreign travel is continually changing and updating. If you are planning a holiday abroad over the Christmas break, please be mindful of government guidance and restrictions which could impact on your child's attendance in school upon your return. The latest guidance can be found [here](#).

Key Dates for the Spring Term 2022:

Covid restrictions allowing, we are planning to hold all of these events in school during the Spring Term:

- Thursday 13th January 2022 – Year 11 Mock Results Day.
- Thursday 20th January 2022 – Year 11 Parents' Evening, 4:30 to 7:30 in school.
- Thursday 3rd February 2022- Year 9 Parents' Evening and Options Evening, 4:30 to 7:30 in school.
- Wednesday 16th February 2022- one to one option interviews for Year 9. Remote event using School Cloud Video Calls. 3:30 to 7:30 .
- Thursday 10th March 2022- Year 8 Parents' Evening, 4:30 to 7:30 in school.
- Week commencing 14th March 2022 – Year 10 Work Experience Week.
- Wednesday 23rd and Thursday 24th March 2022 Evening of Dance performances.
- Thursday 31st March 2022- Year 10 Parents' Evening, 4:30 to 7:30 in school.
- End of March 2022 – construction is scheduled to commence on the new school building.

I wish you and your families a safe and Happy Christmas. Thank you again for your continued support.

Yours sincerely



Mr P Davies

Headteacher