



Tuesday 11th January, 2021

Whole School Update

Dear Parents / Guardians,

I'd like to begin by saying what a delight pupils have been this week. As ever, they have settled quickly into lessons and are presenting themselves in an orderly fashion around school. This letter contains several whole school updates, it is lengthy but please take the time to read it and get in touch if you have any queries.

This year is the beginning of my 18th year as Headteacher of St Thomas More Catholic School. It has been an absolute pleasure to lead the school, however this will be my final year as Headteacher as I plan to retire at the end of the academic year. Our CEO and Local Governing Committee will lead on the appointment of the school's new Headteacher and as always I will keep you informed as and when any decisions are made.

Whole School Expectations

We started this new term last Tuesday by discussing with all pupils our expectations in terms of behaviour. We discussed and reinforced our three rules of Ready, Respectful and Safe, and what these mean in various contexts. We also took the time to congratulate and praise the vast majority of the pupils who follow these rules as a matter of course and go over and above in their approach to school.

We also highlighted a number of issues that were becoming apparent at the end of last term. Can I ask that you please support our school community by discussing these and reinforcing them with your children as required:

- Being courteous and respectful at all times in how they address staff and each other;
- Only a watch to be worn in Years 7 to 11. No other jewellery;
- No nail polish or nail extensions in Years 7 to 11;
- No make-up in Years 7 to 11;
- School shoes only. These should be shoes not boots or trainers.

Curriculum & School Day 2022 / 2023

As a school we have a strong history of offering pupils a broad and balanced curriculum and we are really proud of the range of subjects we offer our pupils. We truly believe that all pupils should be able to study subjects that will support them achieving their future goals. This is something that will not change; we will continue to offer a range of academic and vocational subjects to all pupils. However, there is increased pressure on schools to adhere to Government guidelines associated with the English Baccalaureate. This is something that we value, as it does provide pupils with a solid academic foundation. I feel it is important to add that we are keen to ensure that alongside this pupils have an element of choice as they move into Key Stage 4.

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With this in mind we have restructured our option blocks to allow a greater number of pupils to study the subjects associated with the English Bacalaureate and maintain at least two choices. This will affect pupils in our current Year 9 downwards.

In order to make this happen we will need to restructure the school day to fit in 5 lessons per day. Totalling 25 lessons per week, allowing space for the additional option block. Lessons will be 60 minutes long.

Below I have outlined what this change means for each year group, starting in September 2023.

Year 7, 8, 9

- No change to the subjects studied.
- Amendment to frequency of lessons.

Year 10

- Increase in the number of GCSEs studied to 10.
- Amendment to frequency of lessons.

Year 11, 12 & 13

- No change to the subjects studied.
- Amendment to frequency of lessons.

One change that will affect all pupils is the move to a 5 period day and our plans to slightly amend the school timings on a Friday. It is hoped that by having a slightly earlier finish on a Friday pupils will be able to enjoy many of the out of school sports, dance groups, music groups or just being with their friends that they tell us about so fondly.

You will see below an outline of the school timings, starting in September 2022.

Mon - Thurs		Friday			
		Route A [Years 7 / 8 / 11]		Route B [Years 9 / 10 / 12 / 13]	
08:45	Pastoral	08:45	Pastoral	08:45	Pastoral
09:05	Lesson 1	09:00	Lesson 1	09:00	Lesson 1
10:05	Movement	10:00	Movement	10:00	Movement
10:10	Lesson 2	10:05	Lesson 2	10:05	Lesson 2
11:10	Break	11:05	Break	11:05	Break
11:25	Lesson3	11:15	Lesson3	11:15	Lesson3
12:25	Lunch	12:15	Lunch	12:15	Movement
13:25	Pastoral	12:25	Lunch	12:20	PSHE
13:30	Lesson 4	12:55	PSHE	13:10	Lunch



14:30	Movement		13:45	Movement	13:45	Lunch
14:35	Lesson 5		13:50	Lesson 4	13:50	Lesson 4
15:35	End		14:50	End	14:50	End

In terms of immediate actions, this change will affect our current Year 9 as they complete their Key Stage 4 options process. In the next few weeks more detailed information will be shared with parents regarding this. For all other pupils there is no change until September 2022.

Covid-19 Testing Update

You are likely aware that there have been some changes to requirements linked to LFD and PCR testing. Using some information provided to schools I have attached to this letter some frequently asked questions relating to the updated requirements.

The school's full, updated Risk Assessment concerning the COVID-19 Pandemic is also available on the school's website, under Parent Information.

As I stated at the beginning, a rather lengthy letter but lots of important information. If you have any queries regarding any of this please do not hesitate to contact the school using the email addresses below.

St Bernadette	St Catherine Laboure	St John Fisher	St Therese	Sixth Form
s_stbqueries@stthomasmore.org.uk	s_stclqueries@stthomasmore.org.uk	s_stjfqueries@stthomasmore.org.uk	s_sttqueries@stthomasmore.org.uk	s_6frmqueries@stthomasmore.org.uk

Yours sincerely

Mr J Parkinson

Headteacher



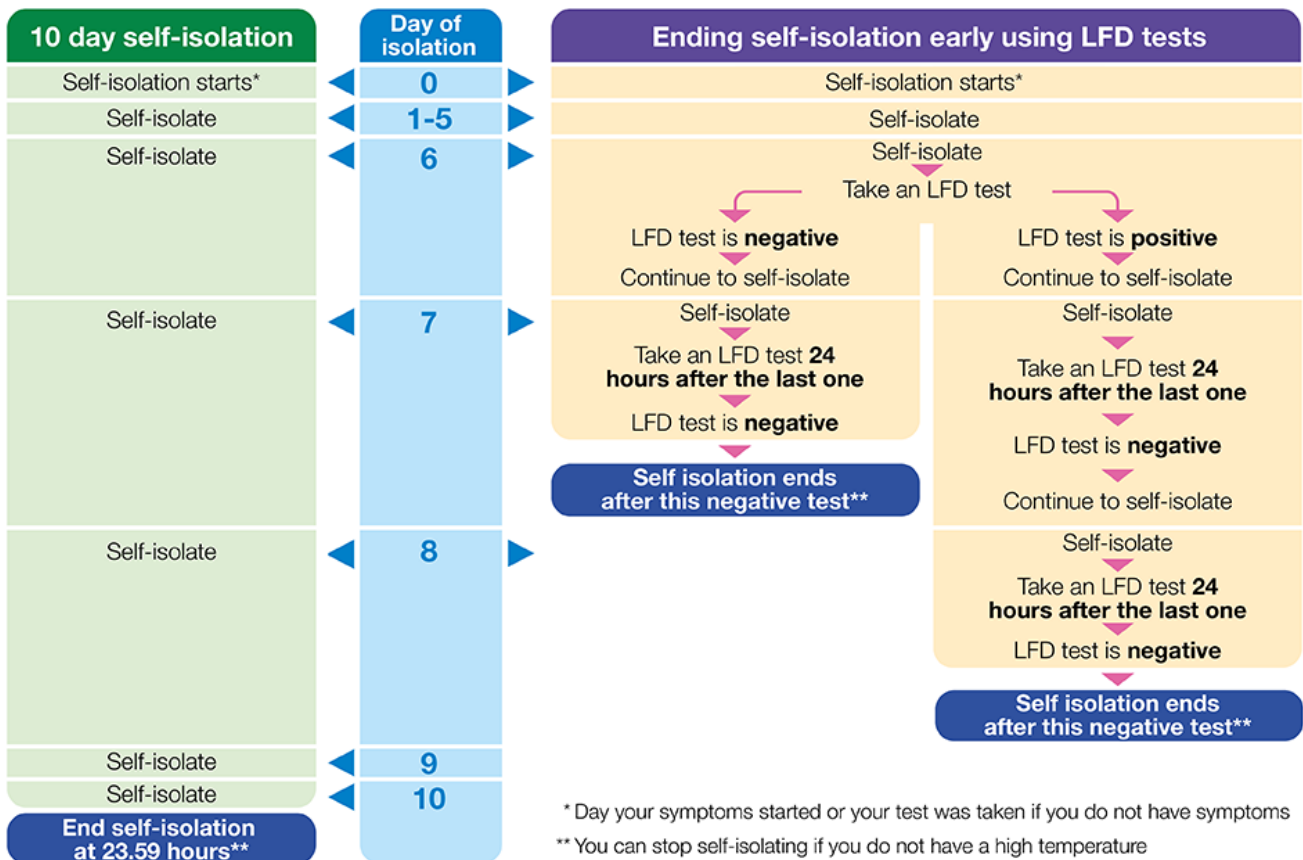
CV-19 Testing: Frequently Asked Questions

What is the position of individuals without symptoms returning after 10 days if their lateral flow is still positive?

- They may return to their education setting and are not required to take any more LFD tests to release themselves from isolation after the 10th day of their isolation period even if they have a positive LFD test result.
- This is because they are unlikely to be infectious after the 10th day of their isolation period. If they still have a high temperature after 10 days or are otherwise unwell, they should stay at home and seek medical advice.
- Please follow the [Stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-or-confirmed-coronavirus-covid-19-infection)

Can you clarify when staff and pupils can return after negative LFD tests?

- Staff and pupils can take an LFD test from 6 days after the day their symptoms started (or the day your test was taken if they did not have symptoms), and another LFD test on the following day. The second LFD test should be taken at least 24 hours later. If both these test results are negative, and they do not have a high temperature, they may end self-isolation immediately after the second negative test result.
- They should stop testing after they have had 2 consecutive negative test results and can return to their education setting on the 7th day if they have tested negative in the morning.





The general guidance for the public says that people ending isolation from day 7 should limit close contact with other people outside their household, especially in crowded places. What is the situation for individuals in schools who end their isolation from day 7?

- If staff and pupils have tested on the morning of day 7, they are able to end self-isolation, and return to their education setting.
- We know that face to face learning is incredibly important for children and young people's education and wellbeing. Education settings have infection control measures in place, including enhanced hygiene measures, ventilation and a regular asymptomatic testing programme that helps to reduce the risk of transmission.
- Furthermore, from Tuesday 4 January, it is recommended that face coverings are worn in classrooms and teaching spaces where pupils in year 7 and above are educated. The advice is short term only, to support pupils and teachers as they return to their education setting this term and builds on the existing proportionate guidance that recommends face coverings for all adults and students in year 7 and above in communal areas of all settings. We have updated our guidance to reflect this. This advice will be reviewed on the 26 January, in line with the review on Plan B measures.

Has there been a change to previous advice that said individuals who had covid in the past 90 days should not do LFD/PCR tests? If so, why?

- Even if someone has tested positive for COVID-19 within the last 90 days, they are strongly encouraged to take part in LFD testing on-site via ATS or at home once they have completed their isolation period for their prior infection.
- This is a change to the previous position because we know people can be infected with Omicron even when they have previously been infected with COVID-19. We will update our FAQs on this point on the document sharing platform.

If an individual who had Covid within the last 90 days tests positive on an LFD should they isolate at home and do a PCR?

- It was announced today that confirmatory PCR tests following a positive lateral flow test result are to be temporarily suspended from Tuesday, 11 January. This will mean that anyone who receives positive lateral flow results for COVID-19 will be required to self-isolate immediately and won't be required to take a confirmatory PCR test.