



# Blue Coat Church of England Academy

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Principal: Mr D Smith

9<sup>th</sup> December 2021

Dear Parent/Carer,

We are now approaching the end of an extremely busy term. We continue to live in uncertain terms and I appreciate how unsettling constant periods of change can be, but have every hope that better times lie ahead, particularly when you consider the advances made in the last year with improved testing and vaccination.

We have sadly had to postpone our OAP Christmas Party due to the current restrictions but we continue with our appeal for donations to the local foodbank. There has also been a change to the timing of the Walsall Civic Service and this will now take place as a Civic Carol Service in St. Matthew's on Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> December beginning at 6.00p.m.

The school canteen will be serving Christmas lunch to students and staff on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> December.

As you will be aware each Friday morning, we have a whole school assembly at St. Matthew's Church. We are exceptionally grateful for all of the support we receive from Rev. Jim Trood and the wider church community. There are a number of services taking place in St. Matthew's over the coming weeks and everyone associated with Blue Coat is more than welcome to attend. The services are as follows:

#### Christmas Eve

5:00p.m. Christingle Service  
11:15p.m. Midnight Communion

#### Christmas Day

9:00a.m. Holy Communion  
10:45a.m. All Age Communion  
1:00p.m. Asian Congregation

#### Boxing Day

10:45a.m. Boxing Day Communion  
1:00p.m. Asian Congregation (On Skype)

School ends for all students on Friday 17<sup>th</sup> December 2021. This is **not** a non-uniform day and students must attend in school uniform as normal.

Dismissal on the last day of term will be at approximately 12.00pm. A lunch service will be available as normal but at an earlier time on the last day of term.



We are required to carry out a programme of COVID testing at the beginning of next term. This is in response to concerns over the new variant and the continuing high infection rates both locally and nationally. All secondary schools have been asked to prepare to test their students once on-site on return in January. Testing all students in school boosts testing participation and will help reduce transmission after a period of social mixing over the school holidays. After this test on return, students should continue to test in line with government guidelines.

**This programme of testing will require a phased return to school beginning on Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> January 2022. Forms will be invited to arrive at a specific time to allow us to manage the testing process effectively. Further detailed information will be sent to you via email. Please make sure that your child arrives in school at the allocated time. Consent is in place from previous rounds of testing.**

Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> January 2022 – Year 7 followed by Year 9 followed by Year 11. Years 7 and 9 will remain in school after their test, Year 11 will go home after their test and return for lessons as normal on Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> January 2022.

Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> January 2022 – Year 8 followed by Year 10 followed by Sixth Form. Years 8 and 10 will remain in school after their test, Sixth Form will go home after their test and return for lessons as normal on Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> January 2022.

The Department for Education have recently advised secondary schools that:

- **Face coverings** should be worn in communal areas in all settings by staff, visitors and students in year 7 and above, unless they are exempt. Students (in year 7 or above) should continue to wear face coverings on public and dedicated school transport, unless they are exempt.
- **Testing** - All educational and childcare settings should continue to encourage staff and students to test twice weekly using lateral flow device (LFD) tests.
- **Contact tracing and isolation** - The current guidance on contact tracing and isolation remains in place. In addition to these, any suspected or confirmed close contacts of the Omicron variant will be asked to isolate for 10 days regardless of vaccination status or age. You will be contacted directly and told to isolate.
- **Vaccination** - All eligible staff and students aged 12 and over are encouraged to take up the offer of the vaccine, including boosters. Vaccines are our best defence against COVID-19. They help protect young people and adults, and benefit those around them. Vaccination makes people less likely to catch the virus and less likely to pass it on.
- To book a vaccination: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/book-coronavirus-vaccination/>

Thank you for your support this term to ensure that your child looks smart each day. If you are getting new school shoes for your child over the Christmas break please ensure they are plain black with no logos and definitely no training shoes or plimsolls. With the winter weather, it is also important that your child is warm. I would ask that if you are buying a new school outer coat, it is in line with the Academy's uniform policy and should be plain navy blue or black, without patterns or logos. Please refer to the attached information regarding uniform expectations, which was sent out towards the end of the Summer Term and I would draw particular attention to the expectations regarding piercings and hair styles.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to you for the support you have given to your children over the first term of this academic year. On behalf of Blue Coat's governors and staff, I would like to wish you a very happy Christmas and a prosperous new year.

Yours faithfully,



D J Smith  
Principal