



Blue Coat Church of England Academy

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Principal: Mr D Smith

25th February 2022

Dear Parent/Carer,

Following recent announcements regarding a strategy to return to more normal ways of working and to live with COVID, I wanted to provide an update on the impact on our school moving forward. We are now working in very different circumstances to two years ago, but it is important that the valuable lessons we have learnt are not lost. In line with many other organisations, we will seek to adopt a cautious approach and will continue to adopt some of the measures we have implemented as a means of keeping the community healthy – it is important to stress that this applies to the potential impact of the wide range of winter illnesses which impact on life in school.

While the wearing of face coverings will no longer be required in any area of the school, both staff and students will be permitted to continue to wear a face covering if they wish. We would ask that any disposable face masks are carefully disposed of after use. We will continue to ensure rooms are well ventilated, the enhanced cleaning regimes will become standard practice and we will maintain the hand sanitizing routine as students enter the building until Easter.

There will no longer be a requirement for staff or students to take a regular COVID test and test kits will no longer be supplied to us. This will present some challenges and uncertainty but as a general principle we would ask all members of the school community to exercise caution, to stay away from school if they are unwell. Please ensure that we are notified of any absence. In the event of a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19, as a school we reserve the right to insist that the student does not attend school, if it is necessary to protect other pupils and staff from possible infection with COVID-19.

In the event of an outbreak, a school may also be advised by their local health team or director of public health to undertake testing for staff and students of secondary age and above for a period of time.

The school will reopen at normal time on Monday 28th February 2022 after the half term break. From this date, we will remove the additional measures which were put in place while COVID rates rose and remained high. The school reception will be open as normal.

Parent Governor Election

Following the receipt of two nominations for the vacancy of Parent Governor, we will be holding an election. The recent restrictions in place in school have delayed the process but we are now in a position to organise the election. Votes can be cast online or using a voting paper. Further details will be sent out in a separate letter next week.



Ash Wednesday

To mark Ash Wednesday on 2nd March, we will be having a service of Holy Communion in St. Matthew's Church, beginning at 8.40a.m. Year 8 will be attending the service along with any other students who wish to actively participate in the service. Students wishing to attend will be asked to give their names to their Head of Year during registration on Monday or Tuesday next week.

Uniform

A polite reminder that our school uniform allows students to wear a plain black jumper, which should have no logos on it. At this point in the school year we want students to be warm, but no hoodies or sports jackets are allowed in school and they will be confiscated. Nose studs / piercings are not allowed and students will be asked to wear a clear stud or to remove their piercing. Finally, if there are any issues with school PE kit, students should wear their normal school uniform (bringing their kit in their school bag) and discuss the issue with their P.E. teacher. They should not arrive in school in other sports wear. Student will not be allowed into lessons if they not wearing appropriate school uniform

Teacher Training Day

As we have previously advised, we will be arranging a teacher training day to coincide with Eid ul Fitr, which is likely to be on Tuesday 3rd May 2022. As the exact timing of this celebration can vary, we will confirm the date closer to the time.

Diversity Day

We are exceptionally proud of the diversity within our school community and it is something that staff and students are keen to celebrate. We are still working on the details but we have a provisional date of Thursday 30th June for our first Diversity Day.

Summer Examinations

The summer examination season is expected as it would in a normal year but with some adjustments to recognise the disruption to learning which has impacted on students in the last two years. Ofqual, the regulator for assessment and qualifications, has announced a range of adjustments which will be made to the way in which examinations will run this year. More details can be found using the link below:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/subject-by-subject-support-for-gcse-as-and-a-level-students-in-2022>

The regulator has also written a letter to share with students and parents/carers, which is included in this letter. Ofqual have also updated some useful information for supporting students to cope with exam stress:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coping-with-exam-pressure-a-guide-for-students>

Vaccination

Take up of vaccinations among students across Walsall remains low and I would ask that you give careful consideration to taking up the offer of a vaccine at the walk-in facility in the Saddlers Centre in Walsall Town Centre. Vaccination is now the primary control measure in terms of reducing infection rates both within school and within the wider community.

Further information on vaccinations can be found on the school website:

<https://www.bluecoatacademy.org/parents-carers/covid-19-vaccinations>

Yours faithfully



D. Smith
Principal



Dear students,

In my job as Chief Regulator of qualifications I get to meet many students, teachers and parents from different parts of the country. Speaking to students like you, who are getting ready for formal exams and assessments, it's clear to me that you want life to get back to normal and that you would like as much certainty about what is going to happen as possible.

For that reason the exam boards have, this week, published for you 'advance information' on their websites. This is subject by subject, specification by specification, specific outlines of the focus of questions across many of your summer exams. [We've added a tool on our website which shows you what is available for each subject.](#)

These materials are just one of the ways we are working to make sure that, despite the disruption caused by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, your exams and formal assessments are less daunting.

You will also get formulae sheets for GCSE maths exams and updated equation sheets for GCSE physics and combined science exams, so you won't have to memorise as much.

As well as advance information and formulae sheets, you will be supported by generous grading, which will provide you with a safety-net to protect you from just missing out on a grade.

We will also publish videos, infographics and other materials to help those of you who have been prevented from ever sitting a formal exam, to know what that feels like.

You can find more information at the following official sources:

- [Rolling update](#)
- [Ofqual Instagram](#)
- [Ofqual blog](#)

Best wishes,

Dr Jo Saxton Ofqual Chief Regulator