



7 January 2022

Dear Parent / Carer

I would like to update you on some information regarding the lateral flow testing programme that has been carried out this week with students on their return to school following the Christmas break.

At the time of writing, the school's testing team have processed over 600 lateral flow tests. Of these tests, 10 have been positive. All of the students who have received positive results have been asymptomatic. I am aware that some of the students who tested positive had a negative lateral flow test the day before / on the morning before returning to school. With this in mind, I want to stress the importance of continuing with twice weekly testing at home on a Sunday evening/Monday morning and Wednesday evening/Thursday morning.

Results should be reported via the Government website [here](#). Positive confirmed cases of Covid-19 should be reported to the school via the link on the school's website [here](#).

Lateral Flow tests are for **asymptomatic** testing – so if your child has Covid-19 symptoms, please book a PCR test. The link to book a PCR test via the Government website is [here](#).

Lateral flow tests were given to students during the last week of the Autumn term. As the school receives additional tests from the government these will be distributed to students. Lateral flow tests can also be ordered via the Government website [here](#).

As you are aware the Department for Education recommends that face coverings are worn in classrooms and communal spaces where students in year 7 and above are educated. The advice is short term only, to support students and teachers as they return to school this term and builds on the existing proportionate guidance that recommends face coverings for all adults in communal areas of all settings. The advice on face coverings in classrooms will be in place until Wednesday 26 January, when Plan B regulations are currently scheduled to expire, at which point it will be reviewed. We ask that students wear face coverings in Attimore Hall when queuing for break and lunch and remove them when eating/drinking.

Coronavirus (COVID-19) spreads from person to person through:

- small droplets
- clouds of tiny airborne particles known as aerosols
- close contact

When someone with Covid-19 breathes, speaks, coughs or sneezes, they release particles (droplets and aerosols) which may contain the virus that causes Covid-19. These particles can be breathed in by another person. The virus can also be picked up from the surfaces the particles land on if you touch that surface and then your face without washing your hands first. This is why regular hand hygiene is still important for controlling the spread of the virus as well as other winter bugs. The best available scientific evidence is that, when used correctly, wearing a face covering may reduce the spread of coronavirus droplets, helping to protect everyone.

Regarding examinations, the guidance sets out that we would not ordinarily expect candidates and invigilators to wear face coverings during exams and assessments, but only on arrival and departure to the examination room. Both candidates and invigilators may wear face coverings if they wish to do so.

Thank you for your support in ensuring your child brings and wears a face covering unless they are **exempt** and has spares and hand sanitizer in their bag. I would like to emphasise that although most young people have very mild illness with Covid-19, measures such as mask wearing and regular testing are about protecting vulnerable students and staff and keeping Ridgeway Academy fully open to all students.

Please may we ask for your support in encouraging your child not to congregate in large groups at the end of school and to go straight home.

We have contingency plans in place in the event that a shortage of staff results in moving to online learning for a specific year group for a short period of time. However, this is a last resort; the priority is to **minimise the spread** by rigorously following guidance on face covering and regular testing.

Thank you for your support.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'S. Mitcherson'.

Sarah Mitcherson
Headteacher