4th January 2022

Dear Parents and Carers

**Happy New Year!** We hope that you have had a restful Christmas, although we are very conscious that many staff, students and their families didn’t experience the Christmas they were hoping for due to the prevalence of Covid. As we begin 2022, with the challenges 0f 2021 behind us, our prayer is for a year of blessings for each one of you. Following the Prime minister’s latest announcements this letter is to clarify some important changes.

**Return to school remains unchanged.** Year 11 will return on Thursday 6th January and consenting students will be tested first thing using LFDs. Other year groups will be taught online and are invited to book a testing slot using: <https://stjosephshorwich.schoolcloud.co.uk> Even if someone has tested positive for COVID-19 within the last 90 days, the government now encourage them to take part in LFD testing on-site or at home once they have completed their isolation period for their prior infection.

**Changes to isolation following a positive test.** Since Wednesday 22 December, the 10 day self-isolation period for people who record a positive PCR test result for COVID-19 has been reduced to 7 days in most circumstances, unless you cannot test for any reason.

Individuals may now take LFD tests on day 6 and day 7 of their self-isolation period. Those who receive two negative test results are no longer required to complete 10 full days of self-isolation. The first test must be taken no earlier than day 6 of the self-isolation period and tests must be taken 24 hours apart. If both these test results are negative, and you do not have a high temperature, you may end your self-isolation after the second negative test result and return to your education or childcare setting on day 7.

We have a large delivery of LFD tests for home use due to arrive in school on Thursday 6th January. You child can pick up supplies from Friday 7thJanuary from school.

**Online Learning.** Here is a video to support students with on line learning for 6th Jan. <https://youtu.be/J5W2y13KtwA> Please ensure your child watches it and check that they can log on to RM Unify. If you are struggling with ICT equipment please contact your Head of Year so that we can support you. Online learning will begin with tutor time at 8:30am – details will appear on epraise. Online learning will just be for a day, but with such high prevalence of Covid cases we are advised to ensure that online learning is available as an immediate back up if staffing levels drop. We are conscious that like other establishments across the country we know that we will be starting term with some teaching staff, site staff and support staff absent due to Covid isolation, so please be patient as staff cope with increased workloads covering for absent colleagues.

**Face coverings:** The government have now recommended that Face coverings are to be worn in classrooms. **Please support us with this by making sure that your child has a mask that they feel comfortable wearing all day while they are inside and on public transport.** We are told that this will be reviewed on 26 January.

**Exams and assessments** in January will go ahead as planned. Currently we are told that GCSEs will go ahead in the summer as normal but we are also told that Ofqual have a contingency plan.

The Prime Minister asked the nation to be prepared for challenging weeks and months ahead but as a community we have every right to be optimistic about the future. The past two years have shown that we are a resilient community able to face anything when we work together to look for creative solutions to whatever obstacles that might lie ahead.

**Take care and God Bless!**

**Mr T McCabe**