

2 September 2021

Dear Parents/Carers

Firstly, I hope you had a pleasant summer. Despite the rather drab weather. I am aware that the 'long-tail' of Covid-19 has affected some families over August and I hope that if your family was affected, you were able to manage your symptoms at home and have now recovered.

As we look forward to welcoming 270 Year 7 students and 140 Year 12 students tomorrow, we are fully ready for all students to return to full-time education on Monday and I hope that this next academic year will continue as normal as possible, including a return to a full programme of trips and extra-curricular clubs.

In terms of Covid management, the Government have relaxed many of the precautions we had in place last year. Most adults have now been double vaccinated and we are encouraging Sixth Form Students to take up the NHS offer to have their first 'jab.' Students 11-16 with underlying health conditions are being contacted by their GP surgery and there are plans to vaccinate all secondary school students this term. The vaccination programme for children is fully supported by the medical profession but it does remain optional. Any student or parent who chooses to not be vaccinated will not be prevented from coming to school and enjoying a full programme of learning.

In order to track and trace any Covid outbreak, parents are being encouraged to continue to do Lateral Flow Tests twice weekly at home throughout September. We are awaiting further deliveries from Public Health England and will issue these to students as soon as they arrive. You can also pick up LFT packs from your local pharmacy free of charge. Thank you for also doing your LFTs tests this week. Further details are contained in our Outbreak Management Plan (see attached).

At Birchwood, we are putting certain measures in place in order to help keep the risk of infection at school as low as possible:

- All members of staff will also test twice weekly
- We will keep additional cleaning measures in place including day-cleaning
- Every classroom will have restocked sanitisation kits
- We will aim to keep every room ventilated as much as possible
- We will retain one-way systems and discrete social and recreational areas (as our students preferred this)
- We will keep the same arrangements in the Café for breakfast, break and lunch. Students are able to purchase their sandwiches at break for lunch if they wish from the Sandwich Hut

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Principal - Dr Chris Ingate

Registered office - Parsonage Lane • Bishop's Stortford • Hertfordshire • CM23 5BD

Telephone: 01279 655936

Email: admin@birchwood.herts.sch.uk

Website: www.birchwoodonline.co.uk

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These measures worked last year and were appreciated by the students so I see no reason to change these for the foreseeable future.

Thank you once again for your continued support.

Yours sincerely

Chris Ingate

Dr Chris Ingate
Principal