27th August 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

**RETURN TO SCHOOL ARRANGEMENTS**

I hope that you have had an enjoyable break. The new term starts on the 2nd September for all pupils, both Primary and Secondary and we look forward to welcoming all of our pupils back as well as welcoming all of our new starters. Let’s hope that this year is less disruptive than the previous two! Much has changed with regard to Government advice concerning schools and Covid and I’m sure that there are some pupils and parents/carers who may be anxious about returning to school but hopefully the information below will help alleviate any concerns you may have.

**Lateral Flow testing**

You will be aware of the lifting of restrictions with regard to Coronovirus which were in place before the Summer holidays, however we are asking all pupils to continue with the twice weekly testing regime at home. Home testing kits continue to be readily available in a variety of locations such as local pharmacies and available to order online. We also have a number of spare testing kits available in school that pupils can take home. If you require any test kits could you please inform school via the Facebook page, office or via the school website.

Furthermore, we respectfully request that your child, if they are in the secondary department, continue to test at home and also to test prior to returning to school 3 and 5 days apart. We will also be testing Secondary pupils in school on the first day back (Thursday 2nd September) and then again on the 6th September. If you do not want your child to be tested, please inform school and if your child is in Secondary and in Year 7 you may need to complete a consent form. If this is the case, please contact school via the usual channels. Although this is not compulsory we are asking for your support in order to identify asymptomatic carriers of the disease and to reduce the transmission of the disease.

If your child tests negative there is no need to inform school, just register the test in the usual way, similarly we will not inform you of any negative test result from school. If there is a positive test, then you are advised to get a PCR test to confirm the result and your child must isolate until the result of the test is confirmed. The home testing regime continues to remain in place and advisably it would be best to test every Wednesday and Sunday evening. Should any test be positive please inform school as soon as possible.

**Self-Isolation and Contract Tracing**

The school is no longer expected to undertake contact tracing. Close contacts will now be identified via NHS Test and Trace. Staff/Pupils identified as close contacts will be contacted by NHS Test and Trace and advised to take a PCR test.

Staff and pupils who experience COVID-19 symptoms or have a positive LFD test whilst at school will be sent home as soon as possible and advised to arrange to have a PCR test. -Parents/Carers will be contacted to collect pupils from the school site as quickly as possible.

-Close contacts within schools etc. will be traced by NHS Test and Trace where the positive case or in the case of our school, staff, will specifically identify the individual as having been a close contact.

-Staff/Pupils identified as close contact will not need to self-isolate while they are awaiting their test results

If the PCR result is positive, the individual must isolate, and NHS Test and Trace will work with the staff/pupil to identify their close contacts.

-The school will continue to keep a record of pupils and staff known to be symptomatic or to have tested positive, so that they can provide assistance if contacted by NHS Track and Trace. Anyone who has previously received a positive COVID-19 PCR test result should not be re-tested within 90 days of that test, unless they develop any new symptoms of COVID-19.

- If the PCR test is negative the pupil can return to school.

-Parents/Carers advised to follow Stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection.

-Parents/Carers reminded to report the results of the PCR test via the school e-mail address/contact details provided by school. The e-mail address/contact details are monitored by the school on at least a daily basis.

In the past once we have had a positive case we have had to inform you of close contacts and many of our pupils have had to isolate on multiple occasions. The new rules stipulate that:

Close contacts who are adults and have been **double vaccinated** with a clear 14 days since their second vaccine no longer had to isolate. Children under the age of 18 and 6 months are not legally required to self-isolate if identified as a close contact even if they live with someone who has been identified as a positive case.

However, anyone who is identified as a close contact is strongly advised to get a PCR test but they do not need to isolate while they are awaiting their results.

If NHS contact you to inform you that you are a close contact they will inform you if you need to self-isolate. School will no longer be doing this. Anyone who is not double vaccinated unless they are under 18 years and 6 months must self-isolate for the full 10 day period regardless of the results of the PCR test result. Please refer to the Government’s advice via this link:- [Stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection)

**Other measures in school to protect pupils.**

* A continued emphasis on hygiene, - pupils will be required to wash their hands at the end of every lesson, and wipe down their work area before they move to their next lesson.
* Pupils in Secondary school will be returning to the Secondary model where they will transition to their next lesson in subject specific classrooms. They will continue to carry around their own equipment in their pencil case which will be provided by school. If pupils wish to bring in their own pencil case that can be wiped down at home every day that is also acceptable.
* Continued ventilation of classrooms – windows and doors to be open at all times, we will continue to review this and update the risk assessment accordingly taking into account weather during the Autumn terms. With regard to this can you please ensure your child comes to school with an outside coat, although pupils can wear hoodies they will not be allowed to have their hoods up within the classroom and around school.
* A tolerance for those pupils and staff who wish to wear face coverings voluntarily, this will include communal areas and within the classrooms. This is individual choice and will form part of the risk assessment. Pupils can continue to wear face coverings should they wish to do so in school, they should also wear masks or face coverings on their dedicated school transport. This is down to individual choice.
* Pupils will continue to eat lunch in the dining hall in their year groups and will have their own zones for break and lunch-time. We will also be introducing PESSPA( Physical Education, School Sport and Physical Activity (PESSPA) in the different zones so pupils will have a range of sporting and social activities to choose from.
* Primary pupils will continue to eat lunch in their classrooms and will also be able to access PESSPA in their own playground.
* You may have seen in the news that the Government are going to supply a number of carbon monoxide monitors to help identify how ventilation can be improved. As soon as we receive these they will be placed in each classroom and further measures put in place should they be necessary.

**Further outbreaks in school**

There is now a new risk assessment in place which is available on the school website, if there is an outbreak which demands a heightened response we have been told to have a contingency planning document which is also available on the school website, this will be used if further outbreaks occur.

**Further information**

* We are hoping to have the yard outside the sports hall modernised with new flooring and a set of outside exercise equipment as a separate yard for pupils to use. This will begin week beginning the 6th of September.
* The Early Years area of the school is set to be renovated with new outside equipment, murals, sensory play, a stage, and hopefully we will have an area of the field to use for all of our Primary pupils with a new OPAL area being created. This will now be fitted In January 2022.
* At the top of the school we have purchased a new Portacabin which is going to be used for our vocational education- motor vehicles, small animal care, bricklaying and plumbing. Pupils will be beginning their vocational courses so we will also have two cars on site for pupils to complete their motor vehicle course.
* In the Forest school are work has begun on developing the land based studies areas for both Primary and Secondary pupils to access.
* All Secondary timetables have been completed so staff will share these with you before the end of term and they will be available on the school website for 2021-2022.
* All pupils have been informed of who their staff are next year.
* We intend to continue to raise standards in school, one of which is uniform and PE kit. Secondary pupils are to come into school in their uniform and change into PE kit and then change back into uniform if they have PE, OE or other sporting activities. We are very aware that for some of our pupils getting changed for PE can cause them some anxiety so if this is the case for your child we can make exceptions to this, all we ask is that you let us know so all staff can be informed. We are also very aware of the sensory issues for some of our pupils and again, we fully understand this, if there is an issue with school uniform could you inform school please. Primary pupils are to be allowed to come into school in their PE kit on the days that they have timetabled PE lessons. Your child’s teacher will inform you via class Dojo of when this is.
* School uniform consists of white t-shirt or white polo shirt and/or light blue jumper for Years 7,8,9 and grey jumper for Years 10 and 11. Black trousers or plain jogging bottoms with plain black trainers or shoes. Primary pupils- green jumpers or cardigans, plain black trousers or jogging bottoms, black shoes or plain black trainers.
* Parents evening next year will be 1st November 2021, 24th January 2022, and 4th July 2022, we will provide further details of these nearer the time. We are hoping to return to face-to face meetings for these and also for EHCP reviews.

**Finally**

I know I wrote a very similar letter last year but hopefully this year things will be back to some form of normality. We are very excited to welcome our new starters to Croft and also looking forward to seeing our returning pupils, enjoy what remains of the school holidays and if there is anything further information that you require please contact school via email, the Facebook page, the school website, or via the school office.

Yours Sincerely

Lee Davis

Head of School