

28 February 2022

Dear Students, Parents and Carers,

On 23 February the government updated its COVID-19 guidance and a number of legal changes have taken effect. [COVID-19 Response: Living with COVID-19 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/covid-19-response-living-with-covid-19)

Please find below updates that apply to New College Pontefract, and further information about upcoming examinations.

COVID-19 Update

What should I do if I test positive?

If you test positive for COVID-19 by PCR test you are no longer required by law to self-isolate but the government advises that you stay at home and do not mix with others. You **must not** attend college for 5 days and should only then return if you have two negative lateral flow test results on two consecutive days. If you receive a positive PCR result, please contact your progress tutor and your teachers so that you can join lessons remotely if you are well enough. A positive test result is the only situation in which a student will be able to join lessons remotely. You can book a PCR test using this link: [Get a free PCR test to check if you have coronavirus \(COVID-19\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/get-a-free-PCR-test-to-check-if-you-have-coronavirus)

What should I do if I have symptoms of COVID-19?

You still **must not** attend college if you have the main symptoms of COVID-19 and should organise a PCR test (high temperature; a new, continuous cough; or a loss / change to your sense of taste or smell).

If you have more general cold-like symptoms, you are advised to carefully make your own decision about whether you feel well enough to attend college. Attendance in college is very important, provided attending is not detrimental to your health or the health of others.

Should I still be using lateral flow tests?

The government is no longer distributing lateral flow tests to schools and colleges and students are no longer advised to carry out twice-weekly lateral flow tests.

While our stocks remain, students may collect one single box of lateral flow tests from the LRC should they really need one. Government advice suggests that for the overwhelming majority of people, lateral flow tests should be used only if they have tested positive and want to check if they are still infectious after 5 days, or if they are visiting someone who is at higher risk of getting seriously ill from COVID-19, for example because of very serious medical issues. Students should no longer be routinely using lateral flow tests. Further information is available at [Rapid lateral flow coronavirus \(COVID-19\) tests - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk/rapid-lateral-flow-coronavirus-tests)

What's happened to Test and Trace?

The government is no longer carrying out contact tracing when a person tests positive. People who have been in close contact with people who test positive are no longer advised to carry out daily tests or to self-isolate.

What is the current government guidance to help reduce transmission of COVID-19?

- a. Getting vaccinated;
- b. Letting fresh air in if meeting indoors, or meeting outside;
- c. Wearing a face covering in crowded and enclosed spaces, especially where you come into contact with people you do not usually meet, when rates of transmission are high;
- d. Trying to stay at home if you are unwell;
- e. Taking a test if you have COVID-19 symptoms, and staying at home and avoiding contact with other people if you test positive; and
- f. Washing your hands and following advice to 'Catch it, Bin it, Kill it'.

If you have not received COVID-19 vaccinations or boosters, you can book them at [Book or manage a coronavirus \(COVID-19\) vaccination - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](#)

You are no longer required to wear a face-covering in college and we respectfully ask students not to wear face coverings in lessons or when meeting with members of staff, in the interests of effective communication and learning.

You are no longer required to wear a face-covering on college buses but it is advisable to do so in crowded and enclosed spaces.

Upcoming Examinations

The start of this half term marks 10 college weeks until external examinations take place this summer. The majority of Year 13 students, and a significant number of Year 12 students completing applied general qualifications, will sit external examinations this summer. These exams will either fully determine the final grades awarded, or make a significant contribution towards them.

Students should this week be formulating a clear and specific revision plan for the next 10 weeks, and in preparation for the March mock exams. The second set of mock exams this year will take place 11-18 March. As well as helping students to prepare for final exams in the summer, these exams will also be used to determine grades this summer should there be further disruption to exams due to COVID-19. It is vitally important that students work hard in preparation for these mock exams.

The college will be sharing weekly guidance with students to help them to make effective use of the time that remains, in preparation for exams. The best way to feel confident, calm and ready for exams is to have a clear and manageable revision plan in place, regularly using revision strategies that are proven to be effective.

Additionally, all Year 12 students will sit formal *Progression Examinations* at the end of June – internal exams intended to ensure that Year 12 students are ready to progress to a second year of study at New College Pontefract.

Yours sincerely



Vicky Marks
Principal