

Horsforth School

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Headteacher: Dr P C Bell

Our Ref: PCB/TRH/JFI

7th January 2022

Dear Parent/Carer,

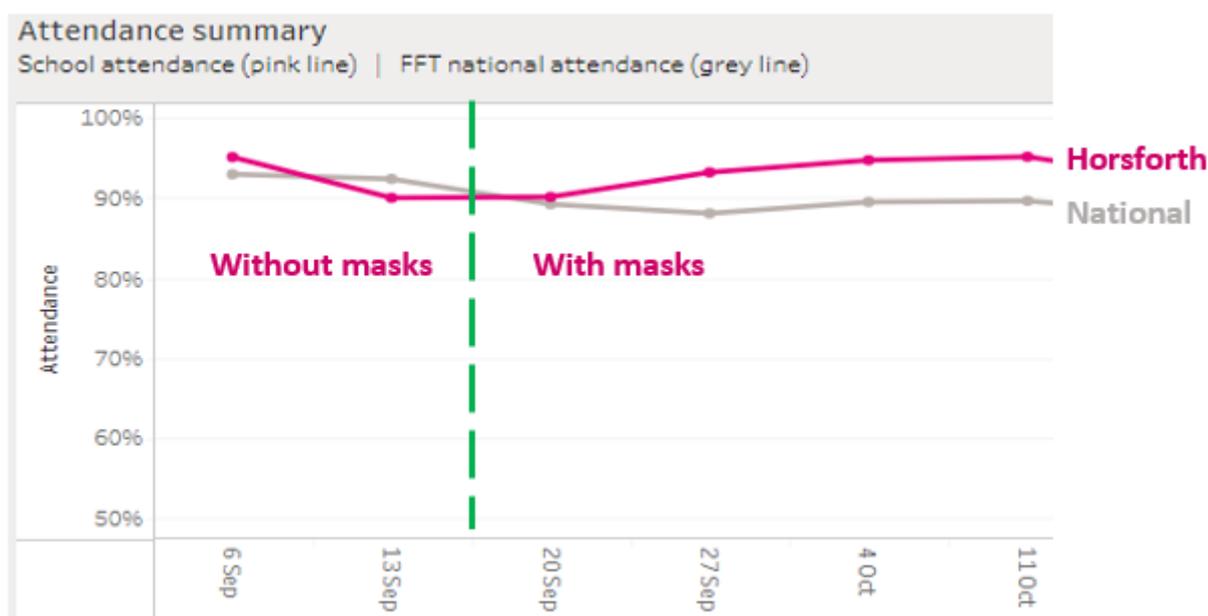
I hope this letter finds you and your loved ones safe and well.

I know I did send a letter earlier this week so my Friday communication is shorter and mostly thank yous and reminders.

Masks in Classrooms

I know this is disappointing for many and wearing a mask is not comfortable, but this is a crucial measure in reducing the spread of COVID and preventing further lost learning. Students have been wonderful and this will also support some of our most vulnerable students and staff.

Much is being made of the evidence for masks and I would like to share with you the impact on attendance of wearing masks in corridors and communal areas.



We followed Government guidelines regarding masks in September and, as I have already shared with you, this led to a significant spike in student COVID cases. Bringing masks back has led to a significant reduction in cases which has been sustained. The graph above shows how we have stayed above the national average for attendance as a result.

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I am convinced that masks have a positive impact in our school.

The Government has said this is a short-term measure until (and including) Wednesday 26th January. It will be reviewed by the Government then and could be removed or continued. If it were removed we would still require students to wear masks in corridors and communal areas.

Please ensure your son/daughter brings two face coverings to school, plain and without logos. A washable face covering reduces the impact on the environment.

Evening Events This Half Term

We have several parent events after school this half term including Year 11 'Engaging with revision' Evening and Year 8 and 9 options evenings as well as Year 12 and 8 parents' evenings. Unfortunately, due to the number of cases of COVID in the local community we have made the decision that all of these events will be carried out remotely. The Year 11 event and options evenings will have prerecorded video links from key staff which will be sent out prior to the event and the parents' evenings will be via the remote option of 5-minute video appointments that we used successfully last year. Please check your emails for further information.

Lateral Flow Tests (Home Testing)

Thank you so much for your support in continuing to perform lateral flow tests at home. We will continue to issue the kits through form time and will only delay if we have supply issues.

The link to reporting results to the NHS is here: <https://www.gov.uk/report-covid19-result>. The link to report results to us is here: <https://forms.gle/RKzCqrFhzDS4CFK87> (please also call or email the school if you test positive).

If I test positive, how long do I isolate for?

There has been an update to the guidance over the holiday about on-site testing for students who have tested positive within the last 90 days. **If you tested positive for COVID-19 within the last 90 days, you are strongly encouraged to take part in the testing in school once you have completed your isolation period. This is because you can catch the Omicron variant straight after the Delta variant.**

Since Wednesday 22nd December, the 10-day self-isolation period for people who test positive with a PCR test has been reduced to 7 days. You can now take a lateral flow test on day 6 and day 7 of your self-isolation period. If you receive two negative test results, you 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 school.

Staff Absence

We have been quite lucky so far and less affected by staff absence than many other schools. I know much is said in the media currently but we will only go to remote learning for Year groups as a last resort. My priority is and will continue to be keeping the school safe and open, in that order.

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If you are aware of any qualified teachers who may wish to return to the classroom on a short term basis then do please encourage them to go to: https://getintoteaching.education.gov.uk/urgent-call-for-qualified-teachers?utm_source=7%20January%202022%20C19&utm_medium=Daily%20Email%20C19&utm_campaign=DfE%20C19 or the school directly on info@horsforthschool.org

It's been brilliant to welcome our students back. A school with empty corridors and classrooms is always quite a sad and soulless place but Thursday has brought the school back to life. I continue to monitor the local and national COVID picture and we will follow Government guidelines closely, particularly regarding masks in classrooms.

Thank you for your continued support, kind messages and patience at this difficult time.

Take care, stay safe and best wishes.

Yours faithfully

Dr P Bell
Headteacher

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