

Dear Parent/Carer

As we approach the Christmas break, we are again seeing increased measures being introduced due to the new Omicron Covid variant. The Government have announced that all secondary aged pupils must be tested on their return to school in an attempt to control the spread of the virus and to alleviate the pressure on hospitals.

As part of this testing effort, schools have now also just been advised this week by the government that they are able to stagger the start of pupils across the first week in January to allow this to happen. However, the plans we are putting in place will mean that, although there will now be a staggered start at Appleton after the Christmas break, all pupils will be back in school by lunchtime of Wednesday 5 January 2022 at the latest.

This information relates to secondary pupils only and primary aged children will start back in school on Tuesday 4 January 2022 at the normal times.

The testing arrangements apply to pupils who have consented to testing and this will also now include pupils who have tested positive for Covid in the previous 90 days (this change follows an announcement by the DfE on 15 December 2021 stating that these pupils should now be included in testing due to the Omicron variant).

The testing arrangements for secondary pupils starting in January is as follows;

Tuesday 4 January 2022

- Year 11 pupils will arrive for testing at 8.45am
- Year 7 pupils will arrive for testing at 10.00am
- Year 10 pupils will arrive for testing at 10.45am
- Year 7, 10 and 11 pupils who are not taking part in the testing, or whose parents do not consent to them testing, should arrive at school at 11:50am and not before.

Year 8 and 9 pupils will NOT attend school on Tuesday 4 January 2022, and online learning will be available instead.

Wednesday 5 January 2022

- Year 7, 10 and 11 pupils should arrive at 8.45am and go straight to form.
- Year 8 pupils who are taking part in testing should arrive at 8.45am and enter by the sports hall entrance.
- Year 9 pupils who are taking part in testing should arrive at 10.00am and enter by the main student entrance.
- Year 8 and 9 pupils who are not taking part in the testing, or whose parents do not consent to them testing, should arrive at school at 11:50am and not before.

Weekly testing will continue after the first week of term and pupils must continue to wear face masks in corridors in January. We will be introducing additional sanctions for pupils refusing to wear a mask or for pupils who are mixing with other pupils unnecessarily, or not going to lessons quickly during changeovers or after break and lunch.



Please look out for additional information in January as the national picture changes quickly, and other measures may need to be reintroduced at short notice.

We are expecting further information regarding the vaccination programme; please support this as vaccination will be the best way to avoid further measures being introduced.

If you have any queries about the timings above, please contact the school via email at info@appletonacademy.co.uk or by phoning 01274 600550, but please be patient if you contact the school over the Christmas break as you may not receive an immediate response.

Finally, I would like to thank all of our pupils and parents for your amazing support this year, and for your patience and understanding when we have had to implement measures or make changes at short notice to respond to national guidance and information from the DfE. I would also like to wish you and your family a safe, enjoyable and restful Christmas and New Year.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Helen Jones.' The signature is written in a cursive style.

Helen Jones
Executive Headteacher