

St Matthew Academy

St Joseph's Vale, Blackheath, London SE3 0XX

Headteacher: Ms Miranda Baldwin

Head of Primary: Ms Joanna Chick



11 February 2022

Dear Parents and Carers,

Spring Half Term is upon us already and next half term the clocks will be changing – the pace of the year is steadily quickening and it has been another terrific half term at St Matthew Academy!

There have been a number of things to celebrate recently, not least our Year 7 Debate Mate team who continue to go from strength to strength. Cheers resounded from a classroom in the East Block recently, causing our Senior Leadership Team to be interrupted as we listened to the celebrations in that followed a number of victories. Well done to all the following pupils in Year 7 for some excellent arguing:

Aarav Nair	Nana Owusu Dorkor	Taurez Taylor Bailey
Abeer Seth	Naylah Mpazi	Yannick Irie
Ahyaa Haddouch	Phoebe - Maurer-Smaller	Mohamed Doumbia
Annie Bradley	Rikael Clarke	Sofia Ismail
Catherine Dugin-Umusu	Sami khan	Lieselotte Maurier Smalley

As ever, our extra-curricular sports clubs have been really well attended. From table tennis to basketball and everything in between, Year 7 pupils have put their best feet forward to represent the Academy and or course stay fit at the same time. Again well done to everyone involved, particularly the members of the Girls' football team who have been involved in one or two titanic battles recently.

A special mention should go out to Phoebe MAURER-SMALLEY who at the time of writing this letter, has amassed 257 Achievement Points and not a single Behaviour Point! This is an amazing effort and we look forward to seeing Phoebe continue to lead the way next half term – so there's a challenge to all those close behind. Between them, Year 7 have accrued over 15000 Achievement Points! Can Phoebe be caught? Watch this space...

Congratulations to 7R1 who have the Half Term Attendance Award for Year 7 with an average of 97.4% attendance since January. Considering the times in which we live, this is an amazing effort from everyone in this Tutor Group and is well above the current national average. A brilliant effort but who will wear this crown at Easter? Again – watch this space!

There are a host of other worthy mentions for this Half Term including pupils involved with Skylark and of course our school production, 'Madagascar,' which will soon have it's opening night – watch out for details on our Website.

I would like to finish with a reminder to all our Year 7 pupils about the importance of safety at lunchtime. Over the last couple of weeks, I have spoken to the Year Group a number of times about responsible behaviour in the playground. With the Year 7 ranks now at 182, it is so important that we are all mindful of each other during the lunch break. It is completely understandable that pupils want to let off steam at this time but I would ask you to remind your children of the importance of behaving in a safe way at school, particularly during unstructured time. Our pupils are generally fantastic but reminders are occasionally needed. We will soon be back on the field at lunchtime, once Spring kicks in.

Thank you to all the parents who attended our KS3 online Coffee Morning. The next Coffee Morning will be on Friday, 25th March and we will be holding this on site, so put the date in your diaries if you are available. We look forward to seeing you then.

For now, we hope you all have a wonderful Half Term!

Yours faithfully

Mr I Gunningham

Assistant Head – KS3

COVID-19 & schools

08.02.2022

Dear Parents and Carers

As there have been several recent changes, we are writing to summarise NHS and Department for Education guidance on testing and self-isolation and what you need to know about your child attending school. This information is correct at the time of publication and may, of course, be subject to change in the future. More details can be found in [NHS guidance](#).

Asymptomatic testing

Regular testing is still very important. All adults and secondary aged children/young people are strongly encouraged to take twice weekly lateral flow device (LFD) tests at home (if they are able) and [report results to NHS](#), including people who have had COVID-19 within the last 90 days and have completed the isolation period. **We are still advising schools to ask all visitors (including parents/carers) to do a LFD test before coming on site, to help protect children and adults in school.**

When to self-isolate

Symptoms

If your child has any of the main symptoms of COVID-19 (high temperature; new, continuous cough; loss/change to smell or taste) even if they are mild, they should stay at home and get a PCR test to check if they have COVID-19. **You should tell your school and your child must not attend school while waiting for the results.**

Contacts

People living with, or who have been in contact with someone with COVID-19, should self-isolate unless they are:

- under 18 years old;
- fully vaccinated –14 days have passed since their final dose of an approved vaccine;
- part of an approved COVID-19 vaccine trial;
- not able to get vaccinated for medical reasons.

Adults and children (between the ages of five and 18) who are contacts should do LFD tests every day for seven days, if they are able to and [report results to NHS](#). They should follow advice on [how to avoid catching and spreading COVID-19](#) and consider limiting contact with [people who are at higher risk from COVID-19](#).

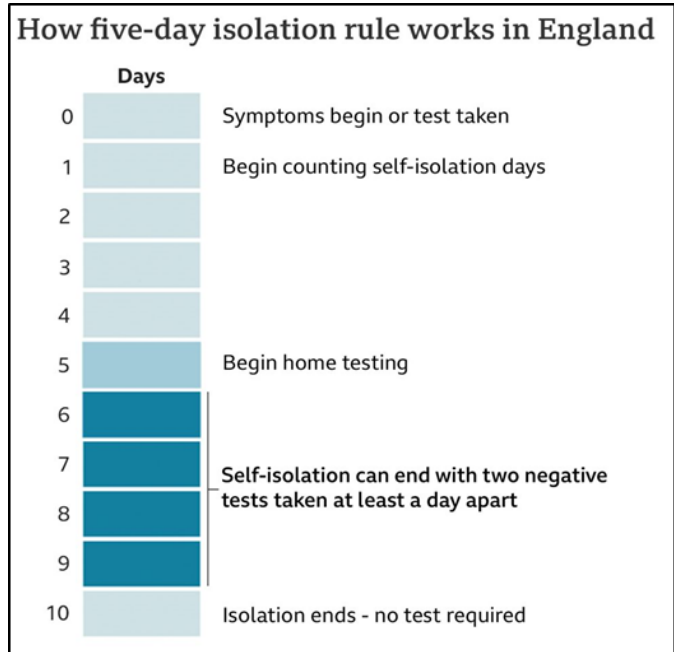
If tests are negative, your child can continue to attend school. If any of the tests are positive, they should self-isolate. If they are unable to test for any reason, please discuss this with the school to consider the best approach to your child attending school.

Testing positive

For adults and children who test positive (on a PCR or LFD test), the self-isolation period includes the day symptoms started (or the day of the positive test, if you have no symptoms) and the **next 10 full days**. After **five full days (i.e. on day six)** you may be able to stop self-isolating if you do an LFD test on days five and six and:

- both tests are negative
- you did both tests at least 24 hours apart
- you do not have a high temperature

You can stop self-isolating after the 10 days if either you do not have any symptoms or you just have a cough or changes to your sense of smell or taste– these can last for weeks after the infection has gone. If you have a high temperature after the 10 days, or are feeling unwell, keep self-isolating and seek medical advice.



Returning to school before the end of 10-day self-isolation period

For anyone ending self-isolation on day six, it's important to [take steps to reduce the chance of passing COVID-19 to others](#). Schools have infection control measures in place, including enhanced cleaning, ventilation and regular asymptomatic testing programme for staff (and students in secondary schools) that help to reduce the risk of transmission.

If your child is ending self-isolation before the end of the 10 days, please contact the school before your child returns so that they can put in place any extra plans, if necessary.

Vaccinations

COVID-19 vaccination is now available free to everyone aged 12 years and over, unless they are medically exempt. You can find national and local details of where to get vaccinated [here](#).

The government recognise that good school attendance and face to face learning are incredibly important for children and young people's education and wellbeing. As always, our schools are doing an amazing job in keeping children and adults in school as safely as possible. There may be times when extra COVID-19 measures are needed if there are high numbers of COVID-19 cases or action taken if there are staff shortages. Your school will inform you of these as early as possible.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Angela Scattergood
Director of Education
Lewisham Council

Dr Catherine Mbema
Director of Public Health
Lewisham Council