



Blackminster Middle School

School Bulletin

Dear parents and carers,

As we settle back into the routines of school life, there are a number of pieces of information I need to share with you.

COVID-testing over the Easter Holiday

Following the success of the asymptomatic testing programme on the return to school, we'd ask parents and carers of students in KS3 to keep testing at home throughout the Easter holidays and into the summer term. The Department for Education have asked Headteachers to share the following information with staff, students and parents:

- Students in Year 7 and above to test twice a week at home (all those who are able to)
- report results online as positive, negative or void. This information is critical in helping us to understand the prevalence of the virus across the country
- continue to test twice weekly over the Easter holidays
- test before returning to school or college for the summer term, either the night before, or morning of, the first day back, to find and isolate any positive cases

We will be issuing more test kits to KS3 students during the last week of this term.

Testing for households

Unfortunately, schools are not permitted to supply test kits for families and households of our students. However, you can access home test kits for adults. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/rapid-lateral-flow-testing-for-households-and-bubbles-of-school-pupils-and-staff> This link takes you to the government website that tells you how to do so.

Changes to the Test and Trace support payment for parents

Parents and carers of children who have been advised to self-isolate by their education setting or by NHS Test and Trace are now able to apply for a Test and Trace Support Payment or discretionary payment of £500, if they meet the eligibility criteria. The extension of the Test and Trace Support Payment scheme, which is administered by district and unitary local authorities in England, ensures that parents receive the financial support they need if they are unable to attend work due to childcare responsibilities.

Parents and carers should apply to their local authority to receive a payment. Applications for the Test and Trace Support Payment scheme are made via the local authority in which the parent or carer resides, not the local authority where the setting is situated, if these are different.

To be eligible applicants must meet all of the criteria that:

- they are the parent or guardian of a child or young person in the same household and need to take time off work to care for them while they self-isolate. This is limited to one parent or guardian per household for the child or young person's self-isolation period
- they are employed or self-employed
- they cannot work from home while undertaking caring responsibilities and will lose income as a result
- they meet all the other means-tested eligibility criteria for a Test and Trace Support Payment or locally determined criteria for a discretionary payment

That their child or young person:

- is aged 15 or under (or 25 or under with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHC)) and normally attends an education or childcare setting
- has been told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace or by their education or childcare setting because they have been identified as a close contact of someone who has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19)

BMS will provide a letter to all parents or carers of the children advised to self-isolate, to support their application to the Test and Trace Support Payment scheme. Parents or carers will then be able to provide this letter to the local authority as evidence that their child is required to self-isolate.

Online bullying

You may have seen on Facebook that unfortunately we've had a little crop of issues where students have been really unpleasant to one another online, and this has been brought in to school.

Cyber-bullying is covered in our curriculum, and all tutor groups were spoken to about this on Monday. Please can we ask parents and carers to keep an eye on children's phones?

The following link shows the age limits for a lot of the social media apps - most of our students are too young to be on these anyway!

https://www.internetmatters.org/resources/what-age-can-my-child-start-social-networking/?fbclid=IwAR1IVjzhdGvgiK9Z5dTpWgUBLZVVvBOcAl8_yUQQhJSazfWAOcbtir0G1I4

End of term FREE non-uniform day!

Along with other fun end of term activities, we would like to invite students to come in on Thursday 1st April in non-uniform free of charge! If children have PE on that day, they must ensure they're wearing clothes they can still take part in the lesson in.

Accelerated Reader

We have had a great number of pupils meeting their reading target this term. A massive well done to all who have managed to do this. Please can you encourage children to read for 20 minutes a day to support their development? The more they read, the easier curriculum is to access! New targets will be set for the final term in the first week back after the Easter break.

Important dates

April 1st Online Parents' Evening

End of Term

Non-uniform day - free of charge

April 19th Start of Summer Term (Week B)

Face coverings in school

Thank you to all of our wonderful students, parents and carers for supporting our position on face coverings in school. The government have said they intend to review their guidance for after the Easter holiday, so I'll provide an update as soon as I have received that guidance.

All that remains for me to do is to thank you once again for the support you have shown to students and staff over the last year, during the period of lockdown and particularly since we came back to school on March 8th. It is a pleasure and a privilege to work with the Blackminster Middle School community.

With very best wishes



Linda McQuone

Acting Headteacher