

29 November 2021

## TO ALL PARENTS/CARERS

Dear Parent/Carer

I hope this letter finds you well. I write to inform you about the current Covid-19 (C19) situation and to thank you for your continued support.

Cases of C19 have dropped from 160 before the half-term break, to well below 10 live cases in the academy. I think the reduction is mainly due to the extremely high take up of the vaccines amongst staff and learners and due to the number of learners who have now already had C19.

The news about the Omicron variant over the weekend is concerning and new temporary guidelines have been announced until there is a greater understanding about the impact of this new variant. I would really appreciate parents'/carers' support with discussing these measures with learners, in particular the government guidelines about the wearing of masks in communal areas and on the buses.

The information below is adapted from the Department for Education guidelines.

On Saturday, 27 November 2021, the Prime Minister announced new temporary measures following the emergence of the Omicron variant of C19 in the UK. The new measures will be introduced as a precaution to slow down the spread of the variant while we gather more information. We will continue to keep this under review as the situation develops.

- **Face coverings.** Face coverings should be worn with immediate effect in communal areas by staff, visitors and learners, unless they are exempt. Learners should continue to wear face coverings on public and dedicated school transport, unless they are exempt.
- **Testing.** We encourage all staff and learners to continue to test twice weekly using lateral flow device tests. Additional test kits have been distributed today.
- **Vaccination.** All eligible staff and learners are encouraged to take up the offer of the vaccine, including boosters. Vaccines are our best defence against C19. They help protect young people and adults, and benefit those around them. Vaccination makes people less likely to catch the virus and less likely to pass it on. To book a vaccination, please visit: [Book or manage a coronavirus \(COVID-19\) vaccination - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk)

Sixth Form learners are advised that wearing face coverings in all communal areas applies to all learners. To avoid there being too many learners in the Sixth Form Suite at any one time, we advise all Sixth Form learners to take any study time after their lessons at home rather than using the Sixth Form Suite during this period.

It is particularly important that Sixth Form learners maintain social distancing with apprentices in the Dove restaurant areas to avoid any unnecessary mixing of the two learner groups. Where possible, Sixth Form learners are also advised to use their own transport to and from the academy.

### **Christmas Jumper Day**

On a lighter note, the Sixth Form are organising a Christmas Jumper Day for Thursday, 16 December 2021. Learners will be asked to donate £1 to charity in exchange for wearing a jumper with their normal uniform (please note that it can be any jumper and you do not need to go out and buy a Christmas themed one). Christmas lunch will also be served on Thursday, 16 December 2021.

### **Winter conditions**

The JCB Academy will always attempt to be open in the event of bad weather. However, it may be the case that on occasions one or more of the bus companies deems a particular route to be unsafe. In these circumstances, a text alert will be sent to parents/carers and learners (before 7:00 am wherever possible) to advise you if a bus is cancelled or is running late. If you have not received a text, your son/daughter should make his/her way to the bus stop as normal. If the bus does not arrive at the designated time they should wait for a minimum of 20 minutes before returning home. In the event that a text is sent informing parents/carers and learners of a delayed time they should wait until that time where possible and weather dependant. It may also be the case that bad weather results in learners being collected by buses earlier than normal in the afternoon. In these circumstances, we will send a text alert to parents/carers.

### **Proposal for Queen's Jubilee Bank Holiday**

As you will be aware, the UK will celebrate Her Majesty The Queen's 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary as monarch this coming June. The May Bank Holiday Weekend will be moved to Thursday, 2 June 2022 and an additional Bank Holiday on Friday, 3 June 2022 will see a four-day weekend to celebrate.

Schools are required to observe the bank holidays, therefore staff and learners are entitled to an additional bank holiday in 2022. However, The JCB Academy will already be on our half term break in the week commencing 31 May 2022.

As this is the case for many schools across the country, the Department for Education has introduced regulations to enable schools to take the additional bank holiday time during the academic year. Consequently, The JCB Academy is making an amendment to our published term dates for the academic year 2021/22. We will close for an additional day during the academic year on Thursday, 21 July 2022 and move the staff training day due on this date to Wednesday, 20 July 2022. This means that our learners' last day before the summer break will be Tuesday, 19 July 2022.

## Y11 information

Thank you to parents/carers who supported the recent parents' evening. Attendance was over 73% and I know that some parents/carers who could not attend have followed up with emails and telephone calls. Y11 learners will be given their mock examination timetables next week. It may be helpful for parents/carers to know that there is a wealth of practice materials and questions for learners to complete on their Google Classroom. It is important that learners are aware that this practice is a vital part of successful preparation for their mock examinations.

Yours sincerely



Mrs J McGuirk  
Principal