

Parent Update

14 January 2022



Dear Parents and Carers

I hope that you and your families had a good Christmas and an optimistic start to 2022. I am sure we are all united in firmly hoping that this year sees an end to the pandemic and some easing of the pressures faced by NHS staff.

LFD Testing

My thanks go to you, our students and our staff for making use of the lateral flow tests before returning to school last week. We have now received supplies of the new kits which take less time and need only a nose swap rather than the nose and throat. As before, these can be collected at morning break or tutor time from the school reception and do not require consent forms.

Senior Phase Feedback

Following the December assessments, students in S4-S6 are now in the process of receiving feedback from their teachers on which areas they showed strengths in and, more importantly, what they now need to do to improve and achieve their targets. This will come in a variety of forms including learning conversations with their teachers and written feedback, all of which students should ensure they make use of. I would ask for your help in encouraging your child to follow the advice given by their teachers and, should they be unsure of what steps to take to improve, encourage them to ask for further advice. Tracking reports detailing next steps will be issued to parents/carers at the end of this month.

Further advice on how to support attainment, including details of study classes, can be found on the school website:

<http://www.deanscommunityhighschool.com/article/71166/Supporting-Attainment>

Validated Self Evaluation

At the end of November the school took part in a validated self-evaluation (VSE) aimed at identifying strengths and areas for development in learning and teaching across the school. This took place over two days, where a team of officers from the Council and senior staff from Deans and other West Lothian schools observed lessons being taught and engaged in discussions with students and staff. When we went through a similar process two years ago, the overall quality of learning and teaching was rated as 'satisfactory' and we have since taken significant steps to improve on this. We were pleased to be given a rating of 'good' during this VSE and will now take forward action points to further improve. The full VSE report has been shared with the Parent Council and will be discussed at the next meeting on 31st January.

Free Bus Travel

From 31st January, all children and young people aged between 5 and 21 years will be eligible for free bus travel within Scotland. Children and young people will be able to access free bus travel on registered bus services across Scotland including a very limited number of local cross-border services from the south of Scotland into northern England.

Children and young people aged between 5 and 21 years old will need to apply for a National Entitlement Card (Young Scot Card). Their existing card will not work, therefore they will need to apply for a new one. The card has an electronic chip inside it. When entering a bus, the driver will ask them to tap the card against a card reader. The card reader will tell the bus driver if the child has free bus travel enabled on their card. All children and young people between the age of 5 to 15 will be required to get parental or carers consent to have free bus travel added to their card. Please note this is not school transport. The free bus travel is for the public bus network only.

Young people 16 years or older can apply for a new Young Scot card themselves.

Applications can be made in various ways:

- The Parents Portal can be used to apply for a card for children between 5 and 15 inclusive;
- Cards can also be applied for online at <https://getyournec.scot/nec/>
- Just like the current process, application forms for Young Scot cards with travel can be made through the school.

I hope you and your families remain safe and well.

Pauline Allison
Headteacher

Reminder of Covid 19 Protocols

As you are aware, with the return of our pupils and staff to school, we have put procedures in to place that support all members of the school community if anyone displays symptoms of Covid 19.

A reminder that the symptoms are:

- High temperature or fever
- A new continuous cough
- A loss of, or change in sense of smell or taste

If a pupil displays symptoms, we will contact you to collect your child (please ensure that we have your most up to date contact details). **Pupils over the age of 16 may return home themselves.** The pupil should, if possible, wear a face covering en route and avoid public transport.

You will be asked to follow Test and Protect protocols, including booking a PCR test for your child and contacting the school when the result comes through to you.

If anyone within your household tests positive for Covid 19, please follow the most up to date Scottish Government guidance with regards to self-isolation and testing. If your child is then unable to come to school, report their absence and the reason for this by calling PSA in the morning.