

7th January 2021

Dear Parents/ Carers

As always, things change very quickly in education these days and so I am writing to let you know how we are continuing to work to minimise the risk of COVID spread at DSTC as well as give you a few updates on recent issues and events.

COVID Testing

We tested students over the first 2 days of term and had 6 positive cases. This shows that asymptomatic testing works, especially with OMICRON. It also slows the spread of this highly transmissible virus amongst both students and staff allowing us to be at school as much as possible. The UK Health Security Agency has said that while Covid levels are high, people can be confident that rapid tests are highly accurate.

Students should be testing twice weekly using lateral flow devices. From Tuesday 11th January 2022, anyone in England who receives a positive lateral flow device (LFD) test result should report their result on **gov.uk** and must self-isolate immediately, but will not need to take a follow-up PCR test. After reporting a positive LFD test result, they will be contacted by NHS Test and Trace so that their contacts can be traced. Anyone who tests positive will be able to leave self-isolation seven days after the date of their initial positive test if they receive two negative lateral flow test results, 24 hours apart, on days six and seven.

This is primarily for asymptomatic testing, if students experience any of the COVID symptoms: a persistent cough, high temperature (hot to touch), loss of sense of smell or taste then they should book a PCR test.

Vaccinations

Thank you for considering the COVID-19 vaccination for 12 to 15 year olds. Around half of 12 to 15 year olds nationally have now received at least one dose. Young people aged 12 to 15 in England are now being offered a second dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine at a minimum of 12 weeks from the first dose, following advice from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI).

Parents can book vaccinations for their child, if aged 12 or over, through the [NHS booking system](#). The Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust team have asked that we share some information with you which is attached :

Face Masks

The wearing of masks is now strongly recommended in lessons as well as communal areas and we will continue to ask students to wear them. If your child is exempt or there is a reason they will not be wearing a mask - please contact the following staff so we can issue an exempt lanyard:

Mrs Harrison for Years 7,8 or 9 - Yvonne.Harrison@dstc.kent.sch.uk

Mrs Harvey for Years 10,11 or Post 16 - Esther.Harvey@dstc.kent.sch.uk

Ventilation

We will continue to have windows open in classrooms and communal areas and this will have a more noticeable impact on room temperature now the cooler weather has arrived. Students will be allowed to wear coats inside the building during this cold spell, therefore it is very important that students have a robust coat, at a minimum, to help keep them warm as being inside may not always be a lot warmer than being outside! If students feel very cold they may wish to wear extra layers UNDER their uniform but please be reminded that at KS3 and KS4 blazers are compulsory, jumpers can be worn underneath the blazer.

Severe Weather

Whilst on the subject of cold weather; should we have to close the school due to inclement weather there will be a message on the website as well as on the Kent closures website. Please consider how your child will get home should we have to close during the day.

Attendance and Punctuality

Good attendance to school still remains a top priority for us at DSTC. Being present and ready to learn each day means your child will maximise their outcomes. In addition, being on time for school shows readiness for learning and minimises disruption to the start of their day. Please continue to support your child in their attendance and arrival to school.

Contact details

Please ensure we have the most up to date contact details for your child. Please email office@dstc.kent.sch.uk if you have any changes to your contact details.

Lanyards

These have worked very well in helping us identify students of different year groups alongside their role of helping students belong to a year group team. Where these have been lost or broken to date, we have replaced them, however, the cost of this is not

sustainable and so if students lose or break a lanyard they will be asked to pay £2 for a replacement.

Reminder of some uniform rules

We really don't want to waste time or have to talk to students about uniform transgressions. A full list of the uniform is [here](#) but for ease and the avoidance of all doubt here are some of the main rules that are useful to revisit.

- **Hair:** students must not attend College with hair that is dyed any colour other than a natural loc one. Students are not allowed to wear wigs unless there is a medical/cultural reason to do so.
- **Jewellery:** Students should not wear any type of jewellery except a wristwatch and a small pair stud earrings (one in each lower lobe of the ear).
- **Piercings:** Any visible body piercing or inappropriate jewellery should be removed by the student before entry to DSTC. Covering them up is not an option.
- **Makeup** is not permitted in Key Stage 3.
- In Key Stage 4, **makeup** should be discrete and natural looking. It is at the discretion of RSL's to judge whether a student needs to remove makeup.
- **False eyelashes are not permitted.** Students will be asked to remove them or if they refuse, full sanctions will be applied.
- **Nails** should be kept short and natural with no nail varnish. False nails of any description are not permitted.

Stephen Patt Funeral

This took place on Thursday 6th January and was attended by a number of DSTC staff. Stephen is survived by his wife and 2 boys and his legacy will live on. He always saw the funny side of things and tried to make light of bad situations, including his own and there are many of our staff and students who worked with him who will miss him terribly but are blessed to have known him. If you or your child would like to leave a condolence message or donate to the Heart of Kent Hospice please do so here:

<https://stephenpatt.muchloved.com/>

We will shortly be launching a fundraising campaign to purchase a bench in his honour.

Eco Centre and Food Forest

On a much happier note please be advised that our crowdfunding raised £16,416 for the joint venture. This was made up by the very kind donations from the community and friends of DSTC but also from the generous AVIVA - who not only matched funds but gave us an extra £10,000 on top as they thought the project was so promising. We will be meeting with the Healthy Living Centre Dartford / Growing Community over the next few weeks to take this project to the next stage and we will keep you updated on each stage and progress we make.

Tel: 01322 224309
Email: Office@dstc.kent.sch.uk
www.dstc.kent.sch.uk



Heath Lane
Dartford
Kent
DA1 2LY

I am also very pleased to inform you that we raised £413 for Macmillan Cancer Support at our recent cake sale.

I hope that the year has started well for you and your families.

Warm regards

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anne Davis". The signature is written in a cursive style with a capital 'A' and 'D'.

Anne Davis
Principal



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on your child's school



"Educating and Empowering Citizens of the Future"

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Heath Lane
Dartford
Kent
DA1 2LY