



12th March 2021

Dear Parents/carers

Today saw the whole of #teamnailsea being back in the building – a fantastic thing to be able to say. I trust the students have been as pleased to have been back as we have been to see them.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the ‘Swab Squad’ - a term of endearment I have come to describe the huge numbers of staff, from a range of roles, who have enabled the school to complete the huge undertaking that was the lateral testing programme. When the government announced the plans for schools to act as testing sites, I have to admit that I was sceptical that this could be done. I should have known better given the grit and ‘can do’ attitude of our staff. I am very lucky to be able to work with such a fantastic bunch of people. I am sure they, like you, will enjoy a weekend to relax and recharge.

Lateral Flow Testing

There has been a lot of debate in the media over the last week regarding the use of these tests in schools and the use of PCR tests as confirmation. Our school risk assessment states that we will act on government and Public Health England advice and although there may seem to be a discrepancy in the advice that schools are given this is the advice we have to act on. I do receive a daily DfE Coronavirus briefing note and this issue was a key feature of the correspondence on Tuesday this week. An extract is shown below, explaining the situation:

If a pupil or student received a supervised school-based LFD test and it was positive then they and other members of their household must self-isolate. PCR testing is not advised if you have received a positive result from an LFD test at a school or college test site. If a parent was to do this and it returned a negative result, the policy remains that the pupil or student, their close contacts, and other members of their household must still self-isolate.

All positive results from rapid tests undertaken at home do need to be confirmed with a standard PCR test. This is because these tests are not conducted in a controlled environment and will not have trained staff on hand. Following positive LFD test at home, a confirmatory PCR test should be booked online or by calling 119. Whilst awaiting the PCR result, the pupil or student and their close contacts should self-isolate. If the PCR test is negative, it overrides the self-test LFD test (at home only) and a child can return to school.

Headteacher: Mrs D Elliott

Mizzymead Road, Nailsea, Bristol, BS48 2HN

Company Number: 8084047

Telephone: 01275 852251 e-mail: nailsch@nailseaschool.com Web: www.nailseaschool.com

Home Testing kits

All students that have given undertaken 3 lateral flow tests at school will be issued with a home testing kit in the next week. Students will need to use the kit to carry out their home test every Sunday and Wednesday. An instruction leaflet is enclosed within the kit. The school is expecting a regular delivery of kits and has set up a distribution programme for each year group allowing for 2 tests every week until we are advised that the student home testing can end. Please note the home testing will not need to take place during the Easter holiday break.

Assessment Update for students completing courses in 2021

I have written separately to families of students in years 11 and 13 who are completing courses this year with details of the plans for their assessments.

As parents of students in other years can appreciate this 10 week period will be a busy one for these students, but this will also be a time of significant workload on staff, given the marking load and moderation expectations that will ensure our processes are rigorous and reflective of students' abilities.

With this in mind, I would ask for students and parents to be mindful of this, accepting that marking focus, in this short-term period, will be on these exam groupings.

Behaviour on the way to and from school

The fact that Nailsea School is located at the heart of the community is one reason it is such a great place to work. However, this also means that local residents and businesses are very aware of the conduct of our students walking to and from school.

As with many other schools, whilst students are wearing uniform they are representing the school outside the school gates and as a school we have a duty to follow up any issues that are reported to us.

This week we received an email concerned about the conduct of both students and parents currently accessing the Station Road entrance, which is in the year 8 bubble. The local resident described students congregating in the middle of the road, which resulted in cars having to swerve. In addition, some parents were reported as driving at an excessive speed whilst dropping off students.

I would ask any students or parents who are using any of our entrances to be mindful of safety and the local residents. Thank you in advance for your support.

Uniform

I am aware that with the time away from school and with some shops being closed there may be some issues with meeting the full expectations of our uniform expectations. If this applies please do contact your child's Head of Year so we can support you. As a reminder

- Leggings should not be worn to school.
- The only hoodie that is acceptable in school is the one worn by Year 11 Leavers.
- Students can wear their coat in the building, if they feel the cold with enhanced ventilation, but hoods need to be down.
- PE kit should be worn on the day of PE lessons, including a plain blue jumper.
- Students can continue to wear the optional school fleece instead of/on top of their school jumper.

Changes to school calendar

As a reminder with students returning this term it was felt inappropriate that the planned INSET days in week commencing 29th March went ahead.

Therefore, Monday 29th March, Tuesday 30th March and Wednesday 31st March will be 'normal' teaching days. This will be week B1.

Term will end for students and staff on Wednesday 31st March with Thursday 1st April being a disaggregated INSET day.

Students will return to term 5 on Monday 19th April which will be a week B2.

We have reallocated the remaining 3 INSET days for the following dates:

- Monday 7th June 2021
- Tuesday 8th June 2021
- Friday 2nd July 2021

As a reminder INSET days are training days for staff who are expected in school. Students are not required in school on these days.

Finally...

School attendance was over 97% for the first three days of this week, indicating a strong degree of confidence in the arrangements that we have put in place to protect staff and students. During my conversations with students this week, the most frequent response I have received when I asked how they were doing is that they were 'tired', an indication that some body clocks still may need adjusting. Yet again, I would like to acknowledge how fantastic the students have been in returning to familiar systems.

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It has also been evident that our students have missed seeing each other and it was really heart-warming to see the reestablishment of those friendships over the last few days. Wishing you all the best for a relaxing weekend.

Take care and be kind

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "D Elliott". The letter "D" is large and stylized, with a horizontal line underneath it. The name "Elliott" is written in a cursive script to the right of the "D".

Mrs Dee Elliott
Head teacher

A large, light blue, semi-transparent watermark consisting of the letters "N/S" in a stylized, bold font. The "N" and "S" are connected at the top, and the "S" has a long, sweeping tail that extends downwards and to the right.