



Dear parents/carers,

## Start of Term Arrangements: January 2022

I hope you and your families have had a good Christmas and I would like to wish you all a very happy new year.

The ongoing pandemic is still impacting our lives, and we continue to have to make adaptations in order to respond to what is being asked of us on a daily basis. I appreciate many of you, like me, will have been testing regularly over the holiday period, as we have sought to meet with friends and family members. Some of you may have had holiday plans altered or cancelled as a result of restrictions.

Whilst seeing various alterations to policy and practice during the last few weeks, I am relieved that schools are re-opening post-Christmas with onsite learning for all students at the start of the spring term. This is the most productive and beneficial way for young people to access the quality of education and experience they deserve.

In order for schools to re-open safely, we have to continue to act appropriately in light of the virus. This will include: maintaining an enhanced cleaning regime, reviewing ventilation by monitoring air quality in classrooms, and wearing of face coverings in school. Additionally, we will continue to encourage staff and students to regularly test, twice weekly, until the need to do so has been removed; and ask that any person who is displaying any of the known Covid symptoms does not attend school until a negative lateral flow test result has been obtained, or after an appropriate period of self-isolation has been completed.

## Onsite Testing for Students

As previously agreed, we will teach lessons online via live and interactive Teams sessions on Monday 10 January. This will enable us to provide onsite testing for every student in Years 7-13, who wishes to be tested, ahead of all students returning to classrooms at the start of this term. Onsite lessons for all will commence at 9.00am on Tuesday 11 January at AGS. As a reminder:

On Monday 10 January:

- Period 1 – all students can access online learning opportunities
- Periods 2 and 3 – Live online lessons for Key Stage 4 and 5 as per students' usual timetables, delivered through Microsoft Teams. Key Stage 3 students are testing in school 9am-12.30pm

- Periods 4 and 5 – Live online lessons for Key Stage 3 with the timetable shared in correspondence before Christmas. Lessons will be delivered via Microsoft Teams. Key Stage 4 and 5 students testing in school 1.30pm-3pm.

If your son/daughter is not able to attend at the times requested, please arrange for them to attend at a time during the school day which suits you, between 8.30am and 3pm.

## External Examinations in January

For some of our students, there will be exams during January which will count towards their final grades in some of their subjects. These exams are set by the examination boards and facilitated in school. These exams will take place as scheduled. The government have issued guidance today which confirms that students and invigilators will not have to wear face coverings whilst in an examination, but are required to wear a face covering until seated (unless exempt).

## Face Coverings to be worn in School

We finished last term with face coverings being worn by students and staff in areas of greater congestion in school i.e. when moving between lessons and when in areas such as the school hall and the school canteen. This expectation will continue until we are directed otherwise.

We heard, over the Christmas break, that students in schools throughout England will now be expected to also wear face coverings whilst in lessons. This is something which we will be adopting at AGS from Tuesday 11 January, when students return to classrooms. The government have said that this decision will be reviewed at the end of this month.

All of us are being asked to wear face coverings more frequently at the moment and being reminded that these help protect us and others by reducing the risk of transmission. All of us are expected to comply with the wearing of face coverings in certain situations, unless we are medically exempt from doing so. I am aware that a small number of students will be medically exempt from wearing a face covering and we will work with these students and their families to enable this to happen. In order for your son/daughter to be exempt from wearing a face covering in school, we will need a parent/carer to contact their Pastoral Manager or email [pastoral@anthonygell.co.uk](mailto:pastoral@anthonygell.co.uk) to ask for an exemption to be issued/re-issued at the start of the new term. This will enable us to update our records accurately and ensure that we continue to look after all of our students the best we can.

Members of staff will have the option to wear a face covering whilst teaching and whilst providing direct support for students. When a member of staff chooses to wear a face

covering, appropriate steps will be taken to ensure all students can still fully access the learning. When a member of staff opts not to wear a face covering whilst teaching/supporting, they will make reasonable adaptations to reduce transmission risk, which will involve them applying the training we have been given.

Whilst none of us enjoy wearing face coverings, they are one of the responses to Covid which we have grown more accustomed to. The wearing of face coverings in the classrooms is far from ideal and will require even more patience and perseverance from our students; but if this helps to reduce the risk to others, including their teachers and teaching assistants, it is worthy of our support.

Outside of the enforced national lockdowns, AGS has been able to provide onsite learning for every year group on every working day. This has not been able to be replicated in other schools due to larger amounts of staff illness/absence during the pandemic. We will continue to do everything we can realistically do to maintain this excellent record of provision, whilst hoping that we also remain lucky. I am very grateful for all that you continue to do to help this to happen.

This has been a huge team effort up until now and this will continue until we are told otherwise. I am looking forward to the start of the new term and I remain very confident in the way our students, staff and community will work together to better ensure a successful future for all.

Thank you for your ongoing support.

Yours sincerely,



**Malcolm Kelly**  
Headteacher