

23 August 2021

Dear Parents,

Sorry for any intrusion of people's summer holiday from this earlier-than-usual beginning of term letter. The reason for writing now is to let you know the start-of-term Covid arrangements in good time, so if you cannot face reading this email fully, at least please check the **testing section** highlighted below!

Briefly, in other news, you will have read in our press releases how proud we are of the inspection outcomes at St Andrew's Prep and the College. Both schools achieved the best possible rating of excellent in the two sections of the educational quality inspection: academic achievement and personal development. We are delighted that the quality of our pupils and their teachers has been properly recognised and thank parents for their overwhelmingly positive feedback in the questionnaires.

At the College, we have reported excellent A-level and GCSE results reflecting the hard work of our pupils during difficult times. We are undaunted by press condemnation of the gap between independent and state schools, recognising that we should not be ashamed of doing so well and working so hard to keep our academic provision at a top level through the pandemic.

We hope all parents at the College and St Andrew's Prep feel included to the school community and Eastbournian Society events. With a new café opening opposite the College Reception we hope parents will feel ever more welcomed.

Start of term

The main message for now is that we will be fully open and operating for the September start of term. Mandatory restrictions for Covid have eased. With more than 75 per cent of UK adults now fully vaccinated, and a further seven million UK adults having had one dose, we look forward to a greater and much needed degree of normality to our lives. Vaccination and regular testing are key pillars by which the community will be able to navigate Covid during the months ahead, minimising disruption to pupils' lives, education and all-round development.

Regarding pupils, staff and our daily operation, we will maintain appropriate cleaning regimes, restrictions on visitors and precautions when outside the school 'bubble', and allow anyone to wear a mask if they feel more comfortable doing so. Current guidance no longer advises face coverings to be worn, other than in crowded spaces where pupils come into contact with people they do not normally meet. We will require face-coverings for school transport but otherwise pupils will not be obliged to wear masks within the school 'bubble'. With these common-sense precautions, we take the view that there are important educational and psychological benefits much needed by our pupils with a return to their normal school life, including assemblies and seeing faces uncovered.

Testing

We can start term in this liberalised and happy way with confidence if we can ensure that all staff and pupils undertake regular lateral flow testing on Wednesdays and Sundays. We use the free standard NHS test which will be familiar to existing pupils and many others.

Please can all UK-based parents / pupils source [the freely-available lateral flow tests](#) in good time at home (or pick up free from the College or St Andrew's reception) in order to **recommence twice-weekly testing for pupils in Years 7-13** starting on the evening of **Wednesday 25 August**, then the evening of **Sunday 29 August**, then **Wednesday 1 September** and twice weekly thereafter.

The plan, in keeping with current government guidance, is initially to run this regime throughout September and review after that. Once term is underway, we will supply pupils with more tests from school.

Having done the test carefully on each occasion, please can all pupils and staff register the [test result with the NHS](#) (click link) **and in addition, with the College or St Andrew's Prep** as appropriate (separate links).

Summary of key points for the start of term:

- Pupils must please not return to school if they are displaying any symptoms.
- If one of the lateral flow test results is positive, they must not come back to school, but get [a confirmatory PCR test](#) and follow isolation rules if positive.
- In order to return, all pupils **must** report their **Wed 25 August** and **Sun 29 August** and **Wednesday 1 September results** to the College or St Andrew's Prep using the Microsoft forms (see links above). Results will be monitored and any missing entries followed up. Please help us make a clean and safe start to the term.

With the benefit of testing, we no longer need to isolate contacts of possible or confirmed cases (unless over 18 and 6 months where vaccination is required, see below) which will prevent the unpleasant precautionary isolations that blighted previous terms.

We remain ready and prepared with appropriate contingency plans to keep the school operating should the Covid situation worsen. We hope parents will be reassured and be understanding of any policy changes as we remain responsive to circumstances.

Travel / overseas pupils

Once again, we would like to thank our families who live overseas for their loyalty despite all the tremendous inconvenience and cost of travel over the last period. Travel to the UK has happily become much easier and most pupils will not have to self-isolate. Detailed advice should have reached you in Louisa Cluskey's email of 6 August (reproduced below).

Pupils travelling to the UK from abroad may use one or more of their travel-based commercial test results to **log a result with the school** ([College link](#) | [St Andrew's Prep](#)) instead of lateral flow tests if the dates broadly coincide with the 25 and 29 August and 1 September. We are requesting confirmation of three negative test results (either PCR or lateral flow) from ALL pupils in the full week preceding the start of term.

Vaccination

We acknowledge that vaccination is a personal choice. However, our view is to encourage all eligible members of our community to be vaccinated and to obtain booster jabs as these come on-stream in the autumn. A high vaccination rate will provide us with stronger immunity, reducing the likelihood of community outbreaks and educational disruption. Vaccination has been proven to reduce the likelihood of serious illness from Covid, both for ourselves and those close to us and there is evidence to suggest that it further weakens the risk of transmission.

Some weeks ago, we sent a letter to all boarding pupils, as they are registered with our GPs. More information is available [here](#). UK 16-17 year olds are, from this week, routinely being invited to make appointments at vaccination centres close to home. www.nhs.uk/grab-a-jab will show centres close to where you live and We encourage any pupil who receives an invite for vaccination at any time, to take it up or seek an alternative date

as soon as possible; it is the UK government's ambition to vaccinate all school pupils aged 16-18 with their first jab before term starts.

Aside from the health benefits to individuals and our community, there are other good reasons for getting vaccinated, which include from September:

- Educational benefits – any current pupil who is aged 18 and 6 months or older who has not been double vaccinated **will have to self-isolate at College or home for ten days if they are identified as a close contact of any Covid case.**
- Travel – amber list quarantine exemptions now extend to all UK boarding pupils but not anyone who is over 18 unless they are double-vaccinated in the UK or one of the approved European countries or the US. All these pupils will have to quarantine for ten full days. We recommend this period of quarantine is done at guardians before term starts, so they can obtain the full benefit of the start of the year.
- Ease of foreign travel. Proof of vaccination, especially for over-18s, is fast becoming a quarantine-free condition of entry across the world.
- Access to events and certain venues.

Visiting school

We look forward to welcoming parents, families and guardians to events in school. At start of term drop-off and outdoor venues such as matches we need no restrictions but we ask all parents and visitors to be sensible regarding “hands face space”. Strictly, to enter our buildings and indoor events, we would ask that you arrive having sourced and tested negative on a lateral flow test, either freely from the UK government (<https://www.gov.uk/order-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-tests>) or a travel-based one if you have come from abroad, within the 24hrs prior, even if you are double-vaccinated. Note you will be asked for digital evidence if you come via reception and may be asked to present it at other indoor events (eg concerts, plays) and for meetings in houses / school.

Thank you so much for trawling through this letter. We hope that all is clear and though we understand that there is a spectrum of opinion on how to operate in the current environment, please be reassured that we have carefully assessed risk and benefit for the wellbeing of our pupils in planning for the start of term.

In the meantime, we do hope that your family is enjoying sunshine and some holiday joy and that your child is, like us, looking forward to an exciting and full start to the new academic year.

With best wishes,



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and



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cc staff; pupils

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Appendix — email to families resident overseas re. UK entry requirements

From: Eastbourne College <admissions@eastbourne-college.co.uk>
Sent: Friday, 06 August 2021 16:36
Subject: Quarantine Rules for the UK

Quarantine Rules for the UK

Dear Parents

I hope this email finds you well and you are having a lovely summer break.

I am delighted to write to you today to confirm some information that we have received from the Department for Education about the requirements for quarantining when arriving into the UK.

At the time of writing, please find the latest guidance below (**albeit this is subject to change and we will continue to keep you updated of any further changes**):

Green and amber list countries

All boarding pupils under the age of 18, and who have not travelled through a red list country in the ten days prior to arriving in the UK, do not need to quarantine on arrival to the UK. However, pupils will still need to follow the government guidance for travelling to the UK. Information can be found within the government's [how-to-quarantine-when-you-arrive-in-England](#) guidance.

Before leaving for the UK, pupils should:

- have proof of a negative Covid-19 test in the 72 hours before departure
- book a day-two test. This can be booked on the government website <https://www.gov.uk/find-travel-test-provider>. Please ensure that they select a provider that allows 'self-swab at home'. The test-kit can be sent to their boarding house if the arrival date to the UK means day two is after term has started
- complete a [passenger locator form](#).

Amber-plus list countries

As of 8 August, following the downgrading of France to amber, there will be no countries on this list, but this may, of course, change ahead of the start of term. Should any countries be categorised as amber-plus at the time of pupils returning, pupils must follow the same guidance as amber list countries but will need to quarantine for ten days upon arrival, and take a day-two and day-eight test. Pupils may quarantine at their guardian's if arriving ahead of the start of term or in their boarding house if arriving for the start of term, and will be eligible for the [Test to Release scheme](#) after five days.

Pupils over the age of 18 as of 1 September 2021

Pupils arriving from the US and Europe who are over the age of 18 and are fully vaccinated will not need to quarantine on arrival to the UK but will still need to [book and take a day two Covid-19 test](#). Please check the [approved vaccine](#) list before travelling to the UK.

Red list countries

Pupils arriving from a red list country will still need to quarantine. The good news is that pupils will not need to quarantine in a managed hotel, but can quarantine in one of the school's boarding houses from 1 September. The pupil must arrive directly to the boarding house from the airport on arrival to the UK. Travel from the airport to the College must be arranged through the house matron.

Before leaving for the UK, pupils should:

- have proof of a negative Covid-19 test in the 72 hours before departure
- book [book a day-two and day-eight travel test](#). Please ensure they select a provider that allows 'self-swab at home'. The test kit can be sent to their boarding house if arrival date to the UK means day two is after term has started
- complete a [passenger locator form](#).

Further information about quarantine arrangements for boarding schools can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/quarantine-arrangements-for-boarding-school-students-from-red-list-countries>

If your child is travelling to the UK from a red list country, please contact your hsm who can supply relevant forms to complete, and a letter from the Department for Education that your child will need to travel with.

If you have further queries about travel guidance, please contact the hsm or matron in the first instance or the Admissions Department.

We are delighted that travel restrictions have been lifted further and look forward to welcoming you all back and seeing you at the start of Michaelmas term.

With best wishes

Louisa Cluskey

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