



Thursday, 6th January 2022

Dear Parent/Guardian,

I hope you are well and that you have enjoyed the Christmas break.

I am concerned about potential disruption in relation to the spread of the Omicron variant of COVID-19 and I wanted to assure you that the staff at Hazelwood will be doing our very best to keep students at school. I am very grateful for the kindness and support you have shown the school throughout the pandemic, and I look forward to continuing to work in partnership with you.

Hazelwood College's priority is to deliver high-quality education face-to-face, to all learners. The evidence is clear that being out of education causes significant harm to educational attainment, life chances, mental and physical health.

However, with the risk of infection from the Omicron variant still high, we're reminding all of the Hazelwood Community to continue to take the necessary steps to ensure that the return to education is as safe as possible for our staff and students.

COVID-19 continues to be a virus that we are learning to live with and the need to reduce the disruption to children and learners' education remains.

### **HAS ANYTHING CHANGED?**

#### ***Self-isolation:***

The NI Executive has announced a change to the rules on self-isolation for positive cases, reducing the period from 10 days to seven, providing the individual has negative LFD results on both days 6 and 7 with tests taken 24 hours apart.

#### ***Testing:***

The *Department of Health* has confirmed that, from 5th January 2022, people in Northern Ireland who get a positive lateral flow test no longer need a PCR test to confirm that result.

If a lateral flow is positive, assume the person has COVID-19 and that they are infectious.

To maximise the number of students in school for the maximum amount of time, the NI Executive is continuing the guidance of face coverings, that they are worn inside school buildings, teaching spaces and transport, in light of the Omicron variant surge. We are also encouraging the use of lateral flow tests.

## HAZELWOOD COLLEGE'S CONTINGENCY PLANNING

The Department of Education (DE) has asked schools to have contingency plans in place for the delivery of remote learning in the event of a school closure, or if a class or any larger group of pupils across a year group need to self-isolate.

Currently, some schools are experiencing difficulties in sourcing a sufficient number of substitute teachers to cover COVID-19 staff absences. There have also been shortages of support and ancillary staff. DE has advised that in such circumstances, schools may need to use remote learning at very short notice.

### ***We have three plans prepared:***

#### **PLAN A**

To keep **all** year groups in school and provide additional support classes

#### **PLAN B**

To keep Years 11, 12, 13 & 14 in school and remove additional support classes  
Rotate remote learning days for Years 8, 9 & 10 (*Google Classroom Learning Tasks*)

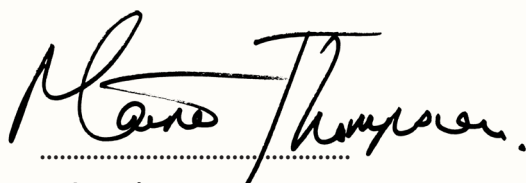
#### **PLAN C**

To rotate remote learning days for **all** year groups (*Google Classroom Learning Tasks*)

We want to make Plan A work and will only resort to Plan B and Plan C if there are unmanageable staff shortages.

We will continue to keep in touch with you in relation to contingency planning.

Yours faithfully,



Máire Thompson  
**Principal**

