



# HITCHIN GIRLS' SCHOOL

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Headteacher: Mrs F.C. Manning

Ref: 064

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Dear Parents/Carers,

## Changes To The End of Term Arrangements

We have, over the past two weeks, had a significant number of staff absences and it has been increasingly difficult to source supply staff from local agencies to ensure that we can have a member of staff in every class for every lesson. We remain absolutely committed to providing face to face education for our students, but have reached a point where we are unable to guarantee that we can safely staff the school for next week.

Therefore, for operational and safety reasons, we have decided that the term **will finish at 3:30pm on Friday 17 December.**

We have received guidance from Hertfordshire County Council that they will support this change of term dates in view of the exceptional circumstances. In recognition that many of our families also have children at Hitchin Boys' School, we have coordinated this decision with them so that both schools are taking the same action. The Priory School had already planned to finish on Friday, so Sixth Form consortium lessons all finish on Friday.

Our current plan is to return to face to face teaching in January but, with the current increase in Covid case numbers, this is something that may change. We are fully prepared for any move to remote teaching should this be directed either locally or nationally.

A reminder for you of the return dates for January:

**Wednesday 5 January**      **Students in Years 7, 10, 11, 12 & 13 return at 8.40am**  
**Thursday 6 January**      **Students in Years 8 & 9 return at 8.40am**

Lateral flow testing will take place throughout these days and students will leave their class for approximately 15 minutes to complete the test in one of our two testing centres. They will be informed on the day where to go. Please ensure that you have read our letter of 09 December which outlines the details of the testing in January and also of 14 December regarding LFD testing during the holidays.

I am sorry to have to make this change at this late stage but am sure that you will appreciate the extraordinary situation in which we again find ourselves.

Hertfordshire County Council have asked us to pass on some more information to you around Covid matters and this is reproduced below.

I hope that you all have a good break over the Christmas period.

Yours sincerely,



Frances Manning  
Headteacher



As we head into the festive season, we'd like to say thank you for continuing to play your part in the fight against COVID-19 and helping to keep yourselves and others safe.

We are all looking forward to spending time with friends and family this year, there are simple steps you can take to help make this festive period as safe as possible and reduce the risk of you and your family catching and spreading COVID-19:

- **Get vaccinated** - Vaccination continues to offer the best protection for ourselves and others around us from becoming seriously ill from COVID-19. You can also now get your booster three months after your second dose, to book this and any COVID-19 vaccinations, visit: [www.nhs.uk/covidvaccination](http://www.nhs.uk/covidvaccination)  
Young people aged 12-17 yet to receive their COVID-19 vaccination(s) can find out more and book at: <https://covid.healthierfuture.org.uk/vaccine-information-for-young-people>
- **Test regularly** – 1 in 3 people with COVID-19 don't display symptoms. Regular rapid testing at home can help to prevent transmission. Find out all the ways to get home test kits (LFD tests) at: [www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/rapidtest](http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/rapidtest)  
From 14 December, all adults who are fully vaccinated and children aged 5 to 18 years and 6 months, identified as a contact of someone with COVID-19 by NHS Test and Trace – whether Omicron or not – should take a lateral flow device (LFD) test every day for 7 days instead of self-isolating.
- **Stay at home** – if you have symptoms stay at home and book or order a PCR test online at: [www.nhs.uk/get-tested](http://www.nhs.uk/get-tested)  
If you test positive you must self-isolate for the required period and not have people visit you at home. There is support available to help people who need it to self-isolate, call HertsHelp on 0300 123 4044, email [info@hertshelp.net](mailto:info@hertshelp.net) or visit [www.hertshelp.net](http://www.hertshelp.net)

Finally, please don't send children back to school in January if they have symptoms. Hertfordshire's childcare, nurseries, schools and colleges are working so hard to keep our communities safe and reduce disruption to children's learning and development so let's all work together to help them and each other.

Wishing you all a happy, healthy and safe festive season.

**Hertfordshire County Council**