

Thursday 17th December 2020

Dear Parents / Carers

RE: Rapid testing in schools

You may be aware of the National Testing Programme which will mean that Lateral flow tests are to be used in all secondary schools to help detect asymptomatic Covid-19 cases from January. The government announced the following:

Every secondary school and college in England, as well as special schools and alternative provision, will have access to rapid coronavirus testing from January to help keep staff and students as safe as possible and in education. Building on the success of testing pilots in schools and colleges over the past few months, from January all staff in secondary schools and colleges will be eligible for weekly rapid tests as part of an initial rollout.

Students will be eligible for daily testing for seven days if they are identified as a close contact of someone who has tested positive. Under current guidelines, up to a whole school bubble has to self-isolate if one student or staff member tests positive. From January, those in the same bubble do not need to self-isolate if they agree to be tested once a day. This will improve attendance and ensure young people can benefit from face-to-face teaching as much as possible.

Staff will also be eligible for daily testing if they are identified as a close contact. Roughly one in three people have the virus without symptoms so could be spreading the disease unknowingly. Asymptomatic testing helps to identify positive cases more quickly, and break chains of transmission.

Primary schools will then be supported to roll out testing as quickly as possible over the spring term.

We are now planning for this to start in January, but we are not yet able to give you a start date or to provide you with any further detail. The government have produced a parent guide which should help answer some of the questions you may have, this can be found using the following link:

<https://dfemedia.blog.gov.uk/2020/12/15/mass-testing-in-schools-your-questions-answered/>

Regards



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