

Wednesday 20th January 2021

Dear Parents

Latest update – Lateral Flow Testing

You may have seen that there has been a change in government guidance with regards to the LFTs that schools have been asked to set up.

The change is in relation to close contact testing; we received the following from Gavin Williamson this morning:

'School and college leaders are playing a key role in setting up COVID-19 testing. Testing remains a vital part of our plan to suppress this virus, and the widespread rollout of regular testing using rapid lateral flow tests is already proving beneficial in finding people with coronavirus before they develop symptoms.'

We have consistently been guided by experts, and as part of our testing approach we rolled out daily contact testing in schools on the advice of NHS Test and Trace and Public Health England (PHE).

Both NHS Test and Trace and PHE have now reviewed that advice, and concluded that, in light of the higher prevalence and rates of transmission of the new variant, further evaluation work is required to understand the impact of daily contact testing, instead of self-isolation for those who have been in contact with a case, to make sure it is achieving its aim of breaking chains of transmission and reducing cases of the virus in the community.

In light of that assessment, we are pausing daily contact testing in all but a small number of secondary schools and colleges, where it will continue with detailed evaluation to inform any future resumption and to make sure nobody in the remaining settings is put at any risk.

Regular testing of staff should continue and will increase to twice weekly as further reassurance and to break chains of transmission during this period.'

As a result of this directive, we will not be conducting any further close contact testing until advised to. This does mean that should we have a positive Covid-19 case and if your child is identified as a close contact then **they will need to self-isolate for 10 days.**

We are continuing to test students weekly and from tomorrow will test all staff twice a week. There is no further guidance on students being tested regularly. We will continue to test secondary age students once a week but will review this with Public Health England to see if this should move to twice a week. We are currently planning the mass testing for when we open fully. This will be, however, quite a logistical challenge as this will mean testing approximately 1500 students potentially twice in one week. As you are no doubt aware there

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is no date set for this return, but I can reassure you that we have the plans in place for this to happen.

For those parents who have students attending school I realise that this will be disappointing. We continue to enforce social distancing, mask wearing as well as good hand hygiene and would appreciate your support in stressing the importance of this.

I will update you further when I have any more information.

Kind regards,



Gary Wakefield

Vice Principal