

Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Dear parents,

The Department for Education has recently announced that it will start a programme of asymptomatic COVID-19 testing in primary schools, school-based nurseries and maintained nursery schools.

The first part of this programme is to test staff. Staff will be able to take the tests from 25<sup>th</sup> January 2021 and will be conducting these tests at home, twice a week. Testing is not mandatory, and staff will have the option not to be part of the programme.

At this time there is no further guidance about whether the programme will be expanded to include the testing of pupils. If this changes there will be further communication.

Along with the other protective measures we are taking, staff testing will allow us to help staff work in as safe an environment as possible. Up to one in three people who have COVID-19 have the virus without symptoms so could be transmitting the virus unknowingly. Tackling the pandemic requires identifying asymptomatic, infectious individuals. By testing, we will help to reduce the spread in schools.

Lateral Flow Device (LFD) tests have been widely and successfully used to detect COVID-19 in asymptomatic individuals. No test is perfect, but the speed and convenience of LFD tests supports detection of the virus in asymptomatic individuals who would not otherwise be tested. They are clinically approved and are crucial in the fight against the virus.

If a member of staff does test positive for COVID-19 using an LFD test the school will follow the current public health advice with close contacts identified and asked to self-isolate. This is the process we have been following since the return to school in September and that you will be familiar with. This may mean that our school 'bubbles' close at short notice.

We will continue to support our staff and pupils throughout the pandemic, but please contact me if you have any questions on staff testing.

Warm regards,



Ben Trevail