

18<sup>th</sup> December 2020

Dear Parents / Carers,

**Re: Rapid coronavirus testing**

I am writing to provide parents and carers with information about rapid testing in schools from January 2021. The Department for Education (DfE) announced arrangements ([click here](#)) for rapid testing in secondary schools on Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> December 2020 ([click here](#)).

The main reason for the proposed introduction of rapid coronavirus testing is to reduce the transmission of the virus by asymptomatic individuals. It is estimated that one in three individuals who have the virus do not have any symptoms. The rapid testing is expected to break the chain of transmission and reduce the number of individuals who need to self-isolate. Pilot studies have been carried out in schools and colleges this term in preparation, initially through secondary schools and colleges, for a national approach to rapid testing. School leaders involved in the pilots have reported that parents have felt more confident about their children attending school and that the tests were straightforward to carry out.

The testing will be available on a:

- routine weekly basis for all school staff; and
- serial daily basis (school days) for any students and/or staff who have been in close contact with a person who has tested positive with the virus; this is an alternative to the individuals having to self-isolate.

A summary of the main points contained in the DfE guidance is as follows:

- A lateral flow test (LFT) can be used in secondary schools as part of the initial rollout to try to reduce transmission of the virus by individuals who are asymptomatic;
- LFT does not require a laboratory to be administered; the test is safe, easy to use and gives rapid results;
- LFT does not replace the current control measures in schools;
- LFT should reduce the number of students and staff who need to self-isolate following a confirmed case;
- All individuals being asked to have a test will need to give written consent;
- Individuals who do not want to participate in serial daily testing will need to self-isolate for 10 days;
- In the case that individuals get a LFT positive result, they will have to self-isolate and arrange a confirmatory PCR (polymerase chain reaction) test.

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**Mr Gary Mullings BA (Hons)**  
Headteacher

The advice that has been given to school leaders at this stage is to inform staff, parents and students about LFT. It will take time in January 2021 for school leaders to prepare for its implementation and it is expected that the guidance will be updated. Test kits will be arriving in schools during the first week of January.

I therefore would like to take this opportunity to reassure parents and guardians that school leaders will carefully consider all the guidance and I will provide an update during the first week of the new term.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gary Mullings', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**Gary Mullings**  
**Headteacher**