

21st January 2021

Dear Parents/Carers,

Re: Coronavirus update – Lateral Flow Device testing for primary staff

I hope you are finding your children settling into the rhythm and new way of remote education now that we are in our third week of term. For those children who are in schools, it is encouraging to see so many become adapt to the new format of teaching and learning.

Given that Lateral Flow Device testing is currently receiving much media attention I wanted to update you on the government's next step in their approach to control the Covid-19 pandemic in primary schools. From Monday 25 January all primary schools will start rapid swab testing using Lateral Flow Device Tests (LFD's) for staff. This will occur twice a week, three or four days apart, at home. The LFD's provide a swift result and are designed to identify adults who may have Covid-19 but do not show any symptoms. Testing kits are being provided for all schools nationally so all staff can be tested. It is hoped that this step will help to further break the chain of infection.

If a member of staff returns a positive LFD test result they will then need to take a PCR or Polymerase Chain Reaction test. This is the laboratory DNA test that is processed and recorded by the NHS. In this situation the member of staff will need to remain off work until the result of the PCR is returned. This is now much faster than at the time of the earlier lockdowns and is typically around 24 hours. Following any positive LFD test staff result, it is likely that the bubble in which that member of staff is based, would need to close. The children in that bubble will remain at home receiving remote education until the time of the PCR test is known. In the event of a positive PCR test result, children in that bubble will need to remain at home and self-isolate in line with the current government guidelines for 10 days.

At Plympton St Maurice Primary School we will be asking staff to take the test on Sunday mornings and Wednesday evenings. This is so parents have more notice if we need to close a bubble the following day. Please look out for communication, should we need to close a bubble and children remain at home.

We hope that this extra control measure will not result in bubbles closing but felt it was important to inform you that there is a possibility of closure following these new tests being carried out.

Best wishes



Rob Haring
CEO WeST

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