

Dear Parent/Carer

## Asymptomatic testing and return to school dates

As you know, the Government has declared that all schools are to open from the 8th March. To enable a comprehensive asymptomatic testing programme to be organised, the Department for Education has agreed that schools can operate a phased return. We have adopted this approach.

### Asymptomatic testing

Asymptomatic testing enables students and staff to feel confident that they will be returning to school with the vast majority of the school community having received a negative Lateral Flow Device Test (LFDT). This will help to control the spread of the virus as schools open up during the Government's first step out of lockdown. All students will be offered 3 LFDT on return to school 3 to 5 days apart. Repeated testing is being used in order to ensure students with changing viral loads are picked up and to enable students to move over to home testing having had supervised testing practice in school.

I understand that some students and parents may have concerns over testing - it is not mandatory. However, we feel it is important that as many students and staff are tested regularly. This will hopefully reduce the likelihood of students having to self-isolate following either a positive test or a 'contact' with a case of the virus. Can I remind you that any students showing any of the main symptoms of the virus should not attend school at any time, including reporting for a LFDT. Please follow the guidance issued by the Government about staying at home, self-isolating and seeking a PCR test if you have any symptoms.

As you can appreciate, organising a testing programme of this size and reopening the school at the same time is a challenging operation. All students will be offered their first LFDT before returning to school for face to face lessons. Once a negative test has been recorded, students will be permitted to return to the classroom. Those that opt not to be tested will only be admitted to school on the date stated for their year group in the phased return section of this letter. Please see the table below for the time slots that your child(ren) first 2 LFDT.

### TESTING TIMES

I regret to say we will be unable to respond to or accommodate requests for changes in time slots. We appreciate that this may be an inconvenience, however with over 1000 students to test repeatedly there is little room for individual requests. We have ensured that the first test takes place on the day before your child(ren) returns to face to face teaching to minimise the disruption.

There are a number of resources available to familiarise you and your child(ren) with LFDT procedure. It would be helpful if these could be discussed prior to testing. Please see the link below.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/understanding-lateral-flow-antigen-testing-for-people-without-symptoms>



Unfortunately, parents will not be able to accompany their child(ren) to the test. The coach park will be available for pick up and drop off only. Alternatively, please drop off at a safe location in the village and allow time for your child to walk into school for their test. Please park responsibly in and around the area and avoid Church Street and Carey Lodge where possible when awaiting collection from testing. We encourage students to bring their mobile phone with them so they can contact you once the test has been completed. It should take approximately 30 minutes. You will be asked to register online before attending to speed up the process. You will receive this information separately prior to testing. Please arrive no more than 10 minutes before your allotted time to avoid creating unnecessary queues both for testing and drop of/collection.

Students are recommended to bring a drink of water and tissues with them for the test.

### **Phased return to school**

In order to ensure those taking tests receive a negative result before returning to the classroom, we are adopting the Department for Education recommendation for a phased return. The table attached outlines the start date for your child(ren). We want to return as many students to the classroom as quickly and as safely as we can whilst allowing us time to re-engage students with adapting to life back in school, completing wellbeing checks, re-establishing our culture of high expectations and face to face learning. I will send you further details of this as we approach the time for a return to face-to-face teaching.

Yours sincerely

**Mr S Jones**

Headteacher

