



St Mary's

Catholic Primary School
and Nursery

*Learning and living
together through faith
and education*

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Headteacher: Mrs S M Fau-Goodwin

26th January 2021

Regular COVID-19 Testing for Staff in School

Dear Parents/Carers,

As you may already be aware, the Government have begun to roll out mass testing within schools as a means of identifying COVID-19 in asymptomatic staff and breaking transmission chains. This program involves school staff. There are no plans that we are aware of to expand regular testing to pupils.

The tests are called 'Lateral Flow Tests' and provide a result within 30 minutes. Throughout the course of this week, staff who choose to 'opt into' the scheme, have been provided with COVID-19 Home Testing Kits, and have been asked to administer the test every three days.

We welcome the introduction of staff testing in our school as it provides an additional level of safety and information, as one in three people with coronavirus are asymptomatic. Put simply, anyone could transmit the virus to someone else without them even knowing they have COVID-19 themselves. Obviously, with more regular testing prior to symptoms developing, there is an increased chance of identifying members staff who are asymptomatic. However, as a result, the risk in needing to close one of our school bubbles is greater than before mass testing was introduced. A bubble may also need to self-isolate if a child attending school has tested positive. As you are aware, we have plans and procedures in place and will communicate with you at the earliest possible opportunity.

If a staff member tests positive, they will inform the school. The member of staff is required to self-isolate as per current government guidelines and is also required to arrange to take a formal PCR test at a testing site.

We will at this point need to close the bubble which the member of staff has been working with in school. All learners within that bubble will then need to access our remote learning offer through Class dojo in the first instance.

The current self-isolation period is 10 days. If your child's bubble does have to self-isolate, you will receive a letter through Class dojo explaining the next steps as well as confirming the date your child is released from self-isolation and can return to school or leave your home.

Detailed contact tracing will then take place as we are also required to inform other staff members who have been in contact with a colleague who has tested positive for COVID-19. In turn, this may



affect other bubbles, support for individual pupils, staffing levels or ultimately our ability to continue face to face education for a period of time for a particular bubble.

As always, we aim to give parents/carers as much notice as possible of any bubble closures as well as respecting the sensitive and confidential nature of individuals' personal information.

Despite the introduction of a testing regime in school, this does not mean that we will be relaxing any of our current COVID safe arrangements which includes the wearing of face coverings on site and following the HANDS FACE SPACE guidance. Please do not enter our school site should you or any member of your family develop symptoms of COVID-19 or during a period of self-isolation. Community testing is widely available. If you suspect that you or anyone in your family has COVID-19 please arrange to have a test. Please ensure that both the person being tested and all of the household members self-isolate until the test is negative. If the test is positive, please follow current government guidance. These protocols are vital in stopping virus transmission within our school and wider community.

Once again, thank you for your ongoing support. Please remember, that we are here to help you to support your child. Please do not hesitate to contact the school either by telephone, email or directly through your child's class teacher on Class dojo; everyone would be only too pleased to help if they can.

Please continue to keep yourselves and your families safe.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S M Fau-Goodwin', written in a cursive style.

Mrs S M Fau-Goodwin

Head Teacher