

Dear Parent/Carer

This email is to update you on two things:

National Research Project

Firstly the Department for Education and the NHS are about to conduct a large piece of research to check the accuracy of LFD tests. They are asking for staff and students in schools to volunteer to take a PCR test alongside their LFD. If you would like to support this valuable study then we will give your child a PCR kit to take home and do when they take their LFD test. We just need you to [complete this form](#) and we can order the correct number of PCR tests.

Update on Mask Wearing

As of Thursday the government have said that it is up to individual students to decide if they wish to wear masks in schools to protect themselves and others.

Once again, I will provide you with facts and data to help your child to inform their decision. Since masks no longer had to be worn in classrooms at Balshaw's, the number of Balshaw's teaching staff absent with Covid has doubled. Equally, the number of students absent with confirmed cases of Covid in Balshaw's now means that Balshaw's is in Outbreak Management.

Across the County of Lancashire the figures from the middle of last week (with many schools not completing data returns) are:

- 133 schools out of 261 who submitted their data were at outbreak (up from 78 last week)
- Total of 646 active cases of teaching staff with Covid, many of whom were in school when infectious before getting a positive test.
- Over half of positive pupil cases were in school while infectious before testing positive
- Overall since the beginning of the school year (1 September 2021) there have been 17954 pupil cases by Wednesday, which equates to 10% of the entire state-funded cohort.

Summary:

I would like to thank the many parents who have written in with messages of support for the approach the school has taken to do its best to protect everyone. ***I would strongly urge you to support the continued wearing of a mask*** to avoid the possible future need to undertake remote learning if we cannot staff classes

safely. However, even though we are now in outbreak management for the first time, I am no longer able to enforce the wearing of masks.

All of the staff employed at Balshaw's, including our Catering staff will continue to wear masks and undertake regular LFD tests (this is done daily by our catering team) to protect your children and themselves.

I do hope that as many of you as possible will support the [research into the efficacy of LFD tests](#).

Kind regards

Mr Steven Haycocks

**HEADTEACHER
BALSHAW'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND HIGH SCHOOL**

Your Word is a lamp for my feet and a light on my path. (Psalm 119, vs 105)