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Dear Parent and Carers,

Coronavirus Asymptomatic Testing of Pupils

In my last letter regarding the full opening of schools, I explained I would be sending out further information regarding the testing of pupils for Coronavirus. This advice is constantly changing, the advice below is from today 01.03.2021. If advice changes I will update you.

Pupils aged 2 – 11 years of age (R to year 6)

The guidance states that pupils below the age of 11 will not take part in the lateral flow testing programme.

Pupils aged 11 – 19 years of age (year 7 to year 14)

Please read the information below if you have a child in year 7 or above.

The government have stated that from Monday 15th March, or sooner, all secondary schools including specialist settings will receive lateral flow testing kits for pupils in year 7 and above. The government are encouraging all pupils, who can, to carry out a lateral flow test, initially in school and then at home. The government are encouraging the testing of secondary aged pupils in order to increase safety within school and the wider community as these tests identify asymptomatic carriers of coronavirus.

As a special school, we have completed a risk assessment that states it will be too stressful for our pupils to receive their initial tests in school. The risk assessment identifies it is less stressful for our young people to complete their tests in their home environment as opposed to an unfamiliar on-site testing centre. Testing from home allows parents/carers to provide assistance with swabbing if required. Therefore no testing of pupils will take place in school.

Please be reassured, we are aware that the testing process will not be suitable for all of our young people for a number of reasons and taking these tests is voluntary, but is encouraged for those pupils and parents who are able to manage the process. By taking part you will be helping to keep school open and contributing to maintaining a safe environment.

If you feel your child will consent to this process we would ask you to support testing by following the instructions below.

- 1) Completing a google form which will be sent via text on Tuesday to request your home testing kits.
- 2) Once our testing kits arrive, a testing kit will be sent home from school with your child and will contain instructions for carrying out the test at home.
There will be 7 tests in each kit.
- 3) Your child should be supported to take a test twice a week, following the pattern below:
 - Take a test on a Sunday night for Monday morning.
 - Take a test on a Wednesday night for Thursday morning.

If this schedule is not possible, tests should be taken 3-4 days apart.

- 4) You can only use the test provided from school for your child that attends our setting. The test must not be used for other family members. Please see the final paragraph of this letter for information on how you can obtain tests for adults in your household.

If your child is negative there is no need to contact school. We will send another test kit home after the 6th test has been completed (in case test 7 is void and you need to repeat the test).

If your child's test is void, inform school that the result was void and then repeat the test on the same day with a new test.

If your child tests positive via the home test, you must book a PCR test <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test> to confirm the result and inform school that your child is self-isolating while awaiting the results of the PCR test.

If the PCR test confirms a positive case of Covid-19, your child and all members of the household must self-isolate following the current government guidelines (currently 10 days). Please inform school of a positive PCR result by phoning the school office or by emailing covidpositive@redmarsh.lancs.sch.uk if out of school hours. School will then implement our procedures for tracing close contacts of your child in school, and will inform them to self-isolate.

Household and Support Bubble Testing

Please read the following advice taken from <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/all-households-with-children-of-school-aged-to-get-rapid-covid-19-tests-per-person-per-week>

All households with primary and secondary school and college age children, and childcare and support bubbles, will be encouraged to start regular twice-weekly testing as schools return. Tests will be available for adults in these households to collect on 1 March. As with student testing, this is encouraged but not mandatory. A secondary PCR test will be required for positive lateral flow tests which are taken at home, either through at home PCR testing or at a local PCR testing site.

Getting a rapid test is quick and convenient. The expanded regular testing offer for people without symptoms will be delivered through:

- local authority test sites
- collection at a local PCR test site during specific test collection time windows
- a new home ordering service, which once launched on 1 March will allow people to order lateral flow tests online to be delivered to their home

The following link can be used for further information or google 'order home test kits online'.

<https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/coronavirus-updates/mass-testing-in-your-community/>

Yours sincerely,

Catherine Dellow
Headteacher