

11<sup>th</sup> November 2020

Dear Parents, Carers, and Families,

We hope this finds you well. We have received questions about how the testing machine that is located at the school could support when a bubble is confirmed for self-isolation.

When a positive test result is confirmed for a member of our staff or pupil, we work directly with the London Coronavirus Response Cell. They are from Public Health England. We also work with the Department for Education Coronavirus support team. They are made aware of the school testing machine during this process.

The school completes a detailed risk assessment with those teams. This is to determine 'direct contacts' and 'proximity contacts' during COVID-19 incubation periods. They assess this for our school staff and any other people that would be involved with the specific class timetable. That can be NHS therapists, Local Authority transport teams, Caterlink school dinner team, the BAM premises team, and any professionals that come to school because they cannot complete their work virtually (for example: a social worker). They make the decision on the status of each class and individual.

The decision from Public Health England to move the classes into self-isolation is for 14 days. This is because symptoms can develop within that period. The self-isolation period is to monitor for any symptoms. They confirm that testing should not take place unless symptoms develop.

This means the test machine is not recommended for the classes going into self-isolation because the symptoms could develop at any time in that period. That is why the entire class moves over to the Virtual School whilst the monitoring is taking place. If symptoms developed, the NHS would recommend a test and at that stage we would work out options directly with the family to help get a fast result. We have included a weblink and image from the government website on the 2<sup>nd</sup> page.

#### What are the benefits of the testing machine?

The symptoms for COVID-19 are similar to the flu. The test machine lets us get clear and fast results. At the start of the year we experienced long waiting periods for staff required to self-isolate as they waited for test results. With the testing machine on site, we can make sure any staff or pupils that are showing symptoms can be tested quickly. This will mean no unnecessary closure of classes. We also have the benefit of supporting families to test pupils with staff they know in a quiet and calm space.

We have felt this benefit already this week. We supported a family to use the testing machine for their child. They developed symptoms similar to COVID-19 and the machine confirmed that they were negative. This was very helpful because it informed the family on the same day. Knowing this means the family can help their child return to school when they are feeling better. A staff member also had a test completed and the negative result in 90 minutes helped us with the curriculum plan and equally the staff member's wellbeing. Thank you for the questions that have come through. We hope this provides clarity.

Yours Sincerely,

Vijita Patel  
Principal

Rebecca Shaw  
Vice Principal

### Government Link for COVID-19 Close Contacts:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-contacts-of-people-with-possible-or-confirmed-coronavirus-covid-19-infection-who-do-not-live-with-the-person/guidance-for-contacts-of-people-with-possible-or-confirmed-coronavirus-covid-19-infection-who-do-not-live-with-the-person>

### Government Website Message:

## Main messages

If you have been informed that you are a contact of a person who has had a positive test result for COVID-19, you must self-isolate at home for 14 days from the date of your last contact with them. You could be [fined](#) if you do not stay at home and self-isolate if you are notified by NHS Test and Trace that you need to self-isolate.

Stay at home for 14 days and follow the self-isolation guidance below. Do not go to work, school, or public areas, and do not use public transport or taxis.

You are at risk of developing COVID-19 for the next 14 days. Since we now know that people can become infectious up to 2 days before symptoms begin, you could spread the disease to others if you do not go into self-isolation.

Even if you never develop symptoms, you can still be infected and pass the virus on without knowing it.

You should not arrange for testing unless you develop symptoms of COVID-19. The most important symptoms are: a new continuous cough, a high temperature, a loss of, or change in, your normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia).

If you do not have symptoms of COVID-19, other people in your household do not need to self-isolate at home with you.

Take steps to reduce the possible spread of infection in your home: for example, wash your hands often for at least 20 seconds, using soap and water, or use hand sanitiser.

If anyone you live with is clinically vulnerable or clinically extremely vulnerable stay away from them as much as possible, following the guidance here. For the clinically extremely vulnerable, follow the [shielding guidance](#).