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27th January 2021

Dear Parents/Carers

Twice weekly testing of staff update

As you may be aware from recent reports in the media, primary school staff are now being asked carry out home Covid-19 testing (Lateral Flow testing) twice a week as part of the government's aim to break the chains of transmission of coronavirus. The intention is that this testing programme will identify cases where staff do not have symptoms so that those staff can self-isolate. Under the government guidance if a member of staff receives a positive Lateral Flow test as part of this process they must then obtain a PCR test through the NHS to confirm their result. Please note that whilst a confirmatory test is needed, staff will self-isolate immediately and we will also ask all children and other staff who have been in close contact with that member of staff to self-isolate pending the confirmed result. If the confirmed result is positive the self-isolation period will continue as notified. In the unlikely event the NHS test comes back negative the school will inform all affected families immediately so that their children can return to school. We would like to reassure you that this testing programme is in addition to all of the protective measures already in place in school in order to seek to reduce risks as far as possible. If a member of staff has symptoms they will be asked to self-isolate even if their lateral flow test is negative until they have taken a PCR test.

You may also be aware that secondary schools are carrying out testing of pupils and there have been reports of this also being rolled out in primary schools. This is not the case currently, this has been decided by the government due to the increased challenges as a result of both the age of the pupils (as primary pupils cannot administer the tests themselves) and the number of primary schools. If this position changes we will of course let you know and provide further information at that stage.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "P. Rickeard".

Paul Rickeard
Chief Executive Officer
Durham and Newcastle Diocesan Learning Trust