

20<sup>th</sup> January 2021



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Dear Parent/ Carer,

As we move through this half term of remote learning and partial reopening for students, I would like to thank you all for your support and such positive feedback and engagement regarding our remote learning. Students have been really engaging well. We are still making improvements to this and further information will come to you from Mr Gowney-Hedges, our lead on remote learning, next week.

### Lateral Flow Testing



We are in our third week of LFD testing and our team of trained staff volunteers are managing the process admirably. I fully anticipate that we will be upscaling the operation when students return to school.

Please note that there has been an announcement today from Gavin Williamson regarding the use of LFD tests for daily testing of close contacts. This means that if we have a positive case in school, we will send the staff member or student home immediately and ask them to isolate and take a PCR test. We will track and trace close contacts in school and ask them to isolate for 10 days. Daily testing is no longer an option.

*Message from G Williamson:*

*“School and college leaders are playing a key role in setting up COVID-19 testing. Testing remains a vital part of our plan to suppress this virus, and the widespread rollout of regular testing using rapid lateral flow tests is already proving beneficial in finding people with coronavirus before they develop symptoms.*

*We have consistently been guided by experts, and as part of our testing approach we rolled out daily contact testing in schools on the advice of NHS Test and Trace and Public Health England (PHE).*

*Both NHS Test and Trace and PHE have now reviewed that advice, and concluded that, in light of the higher prevalence and rates of transmission of the new variant, further evaluation work is required to understand the impact of daily contact testing, instead of self-isolation for those who have been in contact with a case, to make sure it is achieving its aim of breaking chains of transmission and reducing cases of the virus in the community.*

*In light of that assessment, we are pausing daily contact testing in all but a small number of secondary schools and colleges, where it will continue with detailed evaluation to inform any future resumption and to make sure nobody in the remaining settings is put at any risk."*

### **Summer Exam Season**

The message to all our Year 10, 11, 12 and 13 students who may be feeling uncertain about how their grades will be awarded is still that we will be running a mock season for both Year 11 and 13, as well as exam-style assessments for any other students who were expecting to sit an exam this summer. This will be an important process and the evidence of what level they are performing at may be enhanced by the addition of centre assessed 'tests' set by exam boards. The school is unable to make any final decisions on when the mock season for Year 11 will now be until it has further details about:

- Students' return to school
- Details from examination boards regarding how they expect the final grade to be calculated.

We will keep you informed as soon as there is further news.

**There is a live consultation available on the link in the Secretary of State's message below. It is open to students and parents as well as educators.**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/consultation-on-how-gcse-as-and-a-level-grades-should-be-awarded-in-summer-2021>

*Message from G Williamson:*

*"Given the further disruption to education, we have regrettably had to review our plans for exams this summer, as I announced on 6 January. We cannot guarantee that all students will be able to fairly sit their exams this summer, and it is my firm policy position that alternative arrangements are needed to award qualifications. Together with Ofqual, we have launched a joint consultation to seek views on alternative assessment arrangements for GCSE, AS, and A levels and propositions for vocational and technical qualifications (VTQs). The consultation launched on Friday 15th January and will run for two weeks. I am keen to hear your views, both through the written consultation, and through planned engagement with stakeholder groups, including teacher unions and schools' representatives. You can read more about the consultation, including further detail on the proposals, on GOV.UK."*

I hope all our families are keeping safe and well at the present time.

Best wishes,



Ms H Bridge  
Headteacher

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