



20 January 2021

Dear Parent/Guardian

Daily testing for close contacts of positive COVID cases

This morning we received confirmation from the Department for Education that the school should no longer offer daily “serial” testing of staff or students who have had close or direct contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID. The objective of this aspect of the testing programme had been to enable those in this situation to continue attending school and not to self-isolate for 10 days.

It has become clear, however, that there is significant doubt about the reliability of test results used in this way. The Secretary of state has written to schools to say:

“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 to make sure nobody in the remaining settings is put at any risk”

Following separate advice from Public Health England which we received last Friday, schools across Maiden Erlegh Trust had already suspended this aspect of the school testing programme.

We will continue to offer weekly precautionary asymptomatic testing for students attending our special provision (along with twice weekly testing for staff). These tests are important and help to keep the school as COVID free as possible. We will need consent for these tests and Mrs Foster, School Business Manager, has contacted the parents of students using our special provision about this.

Yours sincerely

Mr A Johnson
Headteacher