



George Carey Church of England Primary School

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6th March 2021

Re: Return to school and lateral flow testing

Dear Parents/Carers

I hope that you and your family are keeping safe and well. I am writing to say that all of the staff at our school are very much looking forward to welcoming the children back on Monday 8th March.

I understand that the pandemic and the associated school closure has been worrying and frustrating for our families and I appreciate that children's education and wellbeing has been affected during this difficult time. Thank you to all of you who took part so well in the online learning programme.

I am also writing to encourage you and your family to take part in the Lateral Flow Testing programme (LFT) that is available. In order to keep our community as safe as possible, as well as to ensure that your child's education is not disrupted further with additional unnecessary school closures, we kindly ask all families to take part.

Any adults living in households with primary, secondary school children and college age children, including their childcare and support bubbles are now able to access free tests. The tests allow people who have no symptoms to find out if they are infected and, if so, could be unwittingly spreading the virus. One in three people who test positive for COVID 19 do not have any symptoms. LFTs detect cases quickly in under 30 minutes, meaning that anyone who tests positive, but who is asymptomatic, will be able to self-isolate immediately and reduce the risk of COVID 19 spreading the virus to others.

Thank you to families who have already completed their first test prior to the children's return on 8th March. It is worth noting that one family so far has gained a positive test result for their child in the latest round of testing. **If they had not taken part in the programme the child would have returned to school on Monday. Potentially the child could have passed on the virus to staff and children. This family's prompt action has resulted in saving a whole year group bubble from closure** and has meant that the school is a safer place for everyone.

It is also worth noting that the vast majority of school based staff have not been given the opportunity to have the vaccine ahead of other groups within the population and so remain vulnerable. Whilst we have a strict risk assessment in place, teachers and support staff also remain a vulnerable group who are more likely to contract the virus. By taking part in the LFT programme, you and your family are not only working to protect the children, but also the staff at the school too.

We are asking you to take a test with your child once per week. It does not matter which day or time the test is taken, as long as you arrange it regularly and space tests evenly. Once you have the results for your child, please report it via email to the school office. Please do not arrange tests during school opening hours as we do not wish children's education to be affected further.

I know that getting tested weekly may not be convenient, but it is one of the best tools that is available at the moment to track the spread of the virus in order to make strategic decisions about the safety of our staff and families.

The most local testing centres to the school are located at:

- **Gascoigne Children's Centre**, 140 St Anne's, Barking, IG11 7AD. The service is open for both walk-in testing and booked appointments daily.
- **Becontree Leisure Centre**, Althorne Way, Dagenham, RM10 7FH for a walk-in service only.

Please check online for the opening hours.

Finally, I would like to wish you and all your families a safe and wonderful weekend. Thank you all once again for your continuing strong support for the school.

Yours sincerely



Chris Harrison
Headteacher

