

Faringdon Academy of Schools
'Future of Faringdon, Including All, Supporting Everyone to Grow'

Faringdon Infant School

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Headteacher: Sally Robins

Chair of Governors: Pauline Forbes

Wednesday 27th January 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

Introduction of COVID-19 Testing for School Staff

I hope that you are all safe and well and finding ways to remain positive as we work our way through this third lockdown. I am writing to update you on further endeavours to keep our school safe during these difficult times. The Department for Education has recently announced that it will start a programme of asymptomatic COVID-19 testing in primary schools, school-based nurseries and maintained nursery schools.

The first part of this programme is regular testing of school staff. Staff will be able to take the tests twice every week from 25th January 2021 and will be conducting these tests at home. Testing is not mandatory, and staff do have the option not to be part of the programme.

At this time there is no further guidance about whether the programme will be expanded to include the testing of pupils. If this changes we will contact you.

Along with the other protective measures we are taking, staff testing will allow us to create as safe an environment as possible. Up to one in three people who have COVID-19 have the virus without symptoms so could be transmitting the virus unknowingly. Tackling the pandemic requires identifying asymptomatic, infectious individuals. By testing, we will help to reduce the spread in schools.

Lateral Flow Device (LFD) tests have been widely and successfully used to detect COVID-19 in asymptomatic individuals. No test is perfect, but the speed and convenience of LFD tests supports detection of the virus in asymptomatic individuals who would not otherwise be tested. They are clinically approved and are crucial in the fight against the virus.

If a member of staff does test positive for COVID-19 using an LFD test the school will follow the current public health advice with close contacts identified and asked to self-isolate. This is the process we have been following since the return to school in September and that you will be familiar with.

All our other risk assessment measures remain in place and we are doing all that we can to maintain a safe school environment. Thank you for your support in this by keeping your children safe at home as much as possible, and by adhering to our risk assessment if your child does need to attend school. The safety of our school community continues to depend upon all of our efforts.

We will continue to support our staff and pupils throughout the pandemic, but please contact us if you have any questions on staff testing. You can contact the office by emailing us on office@fis.faringdonlearningtrust.org or phoning us on 01367 240655.

Take care and stay safe,

Mrs Sally Robins and the FIS Team