

ABBEY ACADEMIES TRUST
Executive Headteacher: Mrs S J Moore

26th January 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

It is lovely to be back in school with our keyworker and vulnerable children today after yesterday's snow closure. We live in such interesting coronavirus times and some would say, sadly, there is no such thing as a snow day anymore! I hope you all enjoyed Monday's Seesaw home learning, but still managed to fit in building a snowman. Thank you as ever, for your support with the difficult snow closure decision. Staff and pupil safety is always paramount.

As you may know, the Department for Education has recently announced that it will start a programme of asymptomatic COVID-19 testing **for staff** in primary schools, school-based nurseries and maintained nursery schools. Our Lateral Flow Device tests are arriving in school for staff this week. 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. As the tests are more sensitive with higher viral loads, there is a risk of returning a negative result when viral loads are low (e.g. in the early stages of infection). This is why Public Health England recommend two LFD tests 3 to 4 days apart, or regular testing, to enhance detection by picking up any cases which were not detected during the first test and to catch any new infections.

Once the test has been conducted staff will log the test result online. Staff must also separately inform school of the test result. This testing is voluntary. Staff who decline to participate can still attend school if not symptomatic and will follow the usual national guidelines on self-isolation and anyone will get tested if they show symptoms.

Please can I take this opportunity to remind you about our out of hours mobile phone number, so that in the event of your child receiving a positive test result you can contact this emergency number without delay. I only need to know if your child tests positive, not a family member. This is in order for us to consider the need to close a year group bubble and give us the maximum notice to make arrangements. If we are informed of a pupil's positive test result out of hours in good time, it may mean that we can inform a year group bubble before the start of the school day which would help you with arrangements at home. **This number is strictly only to be used to report a positive test result of a pupil, out of office hours.** Please do not send a text message to this emergency number as I need to take key information from you. You will appreciate that I do not want staff to be on call, so this number will be monitored by me. Emergency contact mobile number – **07591 528082**. If I do not answer, it may be that I am momentarily indisposed. Please do not assume I will have picked up your message and can I ask that you try again until you have spoken to me.

Although we have not received many requests for Breakfast and Kids' Club places since this current school closure began, it is important you know that the Senior Leadership Team discuss this important provision regularly. We feel very strongly that, although some of our keyworker families would find this useful, we are not able to minimise mixing and therefore the potential of sending more bubbles home would increase. This would definitely be disruptive for more families.

Should the government announce that schools will continue to be closed after half term, we currently do not anticipate being open for keyworker and vulnerable children during the February half term holiday. This will enable us to deep clean our school. We are giving you this information now in order that you can make any arrangements. Abbey Ark will be open as usual for the all year round children as Nurseries are open. We will of course review this situation in light of any government directives nearer the time. If you are in receipt of Free School Meals, please watch this space for further information regarding the provision we will make for the February half term holiday.

Take care and keep safe. Let's hope that we have had the last of the snow.... it's snow joke!!

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any worries or concerns.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S J Moore', written in a cursive style.

Mrs S J Moore
Executive Headteacher