



**ST JAMES**  
C.E. PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2021

Dear Parents/Carers,

We have been advised from the government that, from early next week, all staff will be given the option to take Lateral Flow Tests (LFT) which are designed to identify COVID-19 in asymptomatic people. While the test result returns very quickly (30 minutes), there are questions over its sensitivity, so should the test indicate a positive result, a follow-up confirmatory test is highly important so the member of staff will then have to book a Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) test. These are the tests, which have been used for some time now, where swabs are taken and sent for analysis and take a couple of days for the result to come back.

The decision has been taken in our Trust that, if a member of staff tests positive on a Lateral Flow Test, the bubble in which that member of staff works will be closed down immediately until the PCR test results are known. If the PCR test results are negative, the bubble will immediately re-open as long as there have been no further positive tests in that bubble in the meantime.

It is worth noting that SAGE found that Lateral Flow tests detect more than 95% of people with high viral loads, with little difference between those who are symptomatic and asymptomatic so, if the Lateral Flow Test is positive it is likely that the PCR test will return with a positive result.

Clearly, this could result in an increased level of bubble closure over the coming weeks so I wanted to make you aware of this. We will endeavour to take prompt and timely action as soon as we are aware of a positive case. Please make sure that we have your most up to date mobile number as we will text you in the event of a bubble closure.

I appreciate that some of our pupils are not yet back on site, and we are still not sure when the current restrictions will end, but I thought it was important that all parents/carers were aware of this in case mass testing of primary staff continues when schools reopen fully.

As always, many thanks for your ongoing support of our school. Hopefully, with vaccinations now ongoing, we will find ourselves in a better position in the next couple of months.

Please do not hesitate to contact the school office if you have any questions regarding this.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs L Belfield  
Principal