

22<sup>nd</sup> March 2021

Dear Parents/Carers,

### **Covid-19 Update: At Home Testing**

I wanted to thank and congratulate everyone for how well the students have coped with the return to school and how they have quickly adapted both to the existing and additional arrangements for ensuring the school is Covid-secure.

It has been particularly pleasing to see the overwhelming majority of students taking part in the in-school testing programme which is giving us all a greater sense of reassurance as we have come back together in school. It is proving a vital tool in our efforts to minimise the risk of the virus. All of the students taking part have demonstrated a high level of maturity and calmness while undertaking their tests.

Thankfully the in-school testing has not, as yet, identified any positive cases but that does not leave us any room for complacency going forward. We have had two positive cases in the Sixth Form this week which were identified by students or their family members becoming symptomatic.

Now that the in-school testing is complete and nearly all students have been tested three times, the school will be adopting the Government's at-home testing regime. This will involve students (whose parents have consented to them taking part in testing) being given testing kits to take home and use twice a week for their own use. The first of these will be distributed to students on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> March. Students will be allocated two boxes containing three test kits in each which will cover testing requirements twice per week until Easter holidays. We are required to keep records of test kit batch numbers allocated to students so if you require more tests because they are lost etc. please contact us rather than borrowing from other families. Participation in this is very important for us as a community; it is not compulsory, but we are strongly encouraging taking part as that benefits us all in helping to keep us and our families and friends safer. If any parent has previously declined consent or did not respond, but would like their child to be given home test kits, please contact Jeanette Salter at [jeanette.salter@shoreham-academy.org](mailto:jeanette.salter@shoreham-academy.org).

Students will be expected to take the test at home twice a week 3-4 days apart. (We would strongly recommend taking the first test of the week on either Sunday evening or Monday morning and then the second test on Wednesday or Thursday). When your child gets their first at-home testing kit, full details of exactly what you need to do will be provided within the kit. Please note that the DofE requests that students who are age 11 need to have their test administered at home by an adult.

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The results of each test **must** be reported to NHS Test and Trace (instructions on how to do this will be included with the kits and you can [click here for link to report a test result](#)). We are also asking you to report the results to us at school, using an Operoo form which we will send to all parents, as the NHS data is not shared with us. Please report the result of the test – both to NHS Test and Trace and school – even if it is negative or void. Doing this will help scientists and medical experts identify where cases are occurring and what further action, if any, they need to take. It will also help us with our contact tracing in school and to understand if there are any issues with the testing programme that we need to address. A full privacy statement about how the information will be used is here [Click Here](#). A guide for how to complete the Operoo form each time your child undertakes a new test is included with this letter.

Some families have already asked if they can have additional kits for testing all family members on a regular basis. These are available for you but from the NHS, local test centre or your employer rather than via the school. You can find out how to access these here [Click Here](#).

We have created a page on our website where you can find key files, guidance and links and an FAQ on home testing. [Click Here](#)

Staff at school will likewise continue to be tested regularly. I do firmly believe that it is vital for each of us to play our part in this testing programme so that we can all be safer, at less risk and able to manage future cases in our community more quickly, should they occur, and with less impact on everyone's daily lives.

As we move out of Lockdown and, we hope, back to a more normal time, the scientists and medical experts will be relying on us all to do our bit to keep monitoring cases in our communities. What has become clear in the research the government has published is that schools have not been places where there has been significant spreading of the virus but, if there are high numbers of cases in a school, this is likely to be the result of high levels of community cases nearby.

We all want to finish this term with everyone in school wherever possible, making the most of face-to-face learning, and able to enjoy a full Summer term. Please help us to make this possible and ensure your child completes their at-home testing twice a week and always reports the outcome both to the school and the NHS Test and Trace.

Best Wishes



Jim Coupe  
Principal

