

11 May 2021

Dear Parents

**Re: Coronavirus (COVID-19) – testing of children at school required**

I have been informed by Public Health England (PHE) that a single coronavirus (COVID-19) case has been identified in your school that is related to the Indian variant of concern.

There is no evidence to suggest this variant causes more severe illness than any other variant currently circulating in the UK.

Close contacts of the case have been identified and they isolated at the time that the initial positive result was notified. This means that the risk of ongoing transmission in the school is believed to be **low**.

However, as a precautionary measure, I need to be certain that there is no asymptomatic transmission by asking **all children and staff members in the school, and all members of their households to take a COVID-19 PCR test**.

**This testing is free and will be available in the school playground on:**

**Wednesday 12 May\* – 10am to 5pm**

**Saturday 15 May – 10am to 5pm**

*\*if this date coincides with Eid, testing will take place on Saturday and Sunday (15<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> May); school will notify you via text message*

I understand you might be concerned about this, but there has been a small number of cases of this variant identified across the UK, including a rising number of cases recently identified in nearby Bolton. So, whilst not uncommon, it is very important for everyone to take part in the voluntary testing to identify and stop any onward spread.

In this case school leaders acted quickly to work with us. The measures school put in place to prevent COVID-19 spread were excellent. This testing is a precaution as we want to make sure there is no risk of transmission.

These PCR tests are different to the normal lateral flow tests more commonly used as part of the routine asymptomatic testing in schools. By using PCR testing, positive results can be sent for genomic sequencing at specialist laboratories, helping us to identify variant of concern cases and their spread.

I would urge you to take part in this testing to ensure that when school reopens on Monday, we are confident that there is no risk of spreading coronavirus.

We understand that this time is a crucial time for the Muslim community, particularly with Eid approaching, and we trust your full support to ensure the safety of all staff, pupils, families and the community at large.

I thank you for your cooperation and would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a joyful Eid celebration.

Yours sincerely



David Regan

**Director of Public Health for Manchester**