

Thursday, 25th March 2021

Dear Parents and carers,

As we are sure you are aware the government has enabled childcare bubbles and families to access Lateral Flow Tests (LFT) whatever the age of their children.

This is not a 'requirement' but an offer for families to take up for children in Primary schools. **However, though it is an 'optional' test if your child takes an LFT test and is positive you MUST inform school.**

They are not a 'conclusive' test – they can miss some people with the virus that is why regular testing happens twice a week. In addition, they can provide a 'false positive' result and need to be followed up by a full lab checked PCR test if a positive result is shown.

There has been no advice available for Primary schools around LFT so we have discussed this with the DFE helpline and Public Health England. They have now made it clear that the school is to treat a positive LFT test outcome the same way as a PCR test and isolate pupils accordingly – **however should a follow up PCR test be negative all pupils can return to school.**

If you as a parent decide that you wish to use the LFT tests our suggestion is to follow the guidance below:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/rapid-lateral-flow-testing-for-households-and-bubbles-of-school-pupils-and-staff>

Teachers in all schools, and secondary pupils, test twice a week to try and 'catch' people with COVID who do not display symptoms using LFT tests. They provide a 'result' in 30 minutes, and as an approach to reduce the number of infections in schools are a very useful tool.

However, with the increase in testing at home it will mean there are likely to be more positive outcomes nationally and therefore more bubble closures for schools. This does not reflect a change in our school approach to COVID safety, we continue to operate as outlined and agreed with Public Health England at the maximum level of bubble isolation possible.

Please remember, should your child's bubble be closed your child will need to isolate for 10 days. In the case of where the closure is due to an LFT test we need a confirmation from a PCR lab checked test. Should that be negative then all children can stop isolating and return to school.

We would like to thank all parents who have acted with caution around the return to school. We appreciate that there remains a level of stress and anxiety around COVID and we would encourage everyone to be understanding towards each other and the school as we continue to follow government advice and guidelines.

Take Care and Stay Safe



Headteacher and the Pilsley Staff Team