



Dear Parents/Carers

I hope you and your family are well. It is almost a year since the first lockdown came into effect and schools were closed in a move that was unprecedented in recent times. Over the last two weeks we have welcomed back our pupils and it has been wonderful to see them return to face to face teaching. I am sure that we will all agree that despite the herculean efforts of every one over the last few months, there is nothing better than to have children return to the classroom and enjoy their learning in school.

We have now completed the process of rapid testing in school and the pupils have been absolutely superb in how they have approached this. It is clear that the tests in school have allowed them to learn how to self-administer the swab so the transition to home testing is as smooth as possible. The vast majority of children have taken their test kits home last week ready to begin testing at home today. The [leaflet](#) that accompanies the test kits clearly explains how to take a test and there is a really useful [video](#) that helps too. Please remember some key aspects regards testing at home:

- Please test every **Monday & Thursday morning**. The whole school is testing at the same time which helps ensure we are as safe as possible.
- If the result is **positive** then you must self-isolate and contact the school immediately. You must also inform the NHS and seek a confirmatory PCR test.
- If the result is **void** then take another test. If the second is void or invalid test you must self-isolate, inform the school and the NHS, and seek a PCR test.
- If the result is **negative** you must inform the NHS and let school know through the link that will be emailed to you every Monday and Thursday morning. Your child can continue their normal routine and attend school as normal following a negative test.
- If you have received a positive PCR test within the last 90 days, it is advised that you do not carry out a Lateral Flow Test as you may still have antigens in your body that could trigger a positive result.
- Further packs of test kits will be distributed before the end of term so your child can continue to test twice a week through the Easter holidays.

If you would like to receive test kits and have previously not requested them or require additional test kits then please contact school for packs. Unfortunately, we can only supply test kits for staff and pupils at school.

Please remember that a negative test result does not mean we should become complacent. It is important for us all to continue to follow advice and in particular 'Hands, Face, Space'. The children have been excellent in following all school systems including the introduction of face coverings in lessons. It is also important to understand that if your child is displaying any of three main symptoms of coronavirus (high temperature, new continuous cough, or a loss of taste and/or smell) you must seek a PCR test. The lateral flow devices in your home test kits are only for individuals who are not showing any symptoms.

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In line with Government guidance, although our uniform expectations remain in place, we understand that families may be struggling to purchase new items of uniform due to national restrictions. Please note that after the Easter holiday our expectation is that all children will be wearing full school uniform and adhering to our uniform policy. I would like to reinforce that this includes hair colour, piercings and nail polish. Please make sure necessary actions are taken prior to the start of the summer term to ensure your child is meeting our standards. If you do require any assistance with uniform then please contact us at school.

We have now released all four parts to our first mini-series of podcasts aimed at supporting children and families through these difficult times. You can view all four episodes by following this [link](#) to the COVID Wellbeing page on our website. We will be looking to produce a second series in the summer term. Our fantastic Student Council are looking to organise a non-uniform day for the last day of term on Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> April. More information will be shared before this date to confirm the charities we will be supporting through the funds raised.

March 23<sup>rd</sup> marks a year since the country went into the first national lockdown. A National Day of Reflection is being held with people encouraged to carry out simple acts of kindness. At times like this we think of all those who have suffered over the last twelve months and our heartfelt sympathies go out to you if you have lost a loved one or family member as a result of this awful virus. I am sure you would also join me in thanking all the critical workers in our community who have worked tirelessly through the pandemic. In particular I have huge admiration for all the frontline emergency workers, including the NHS staff and care workers, who have continued to be there to look after us when we have needed it despite very difficult working conditions.

I am also hugely grateful of all the staff at Stafford Manor High School who have continued to put the pupils first despite school not being open to the majority. I know that all staff would be keen to thank you as parents for all you have done to support your child and family even when times have been tough. Everyone faces their own personal challenges, and we are fully aware that many of you have done some amazing and selfless acts to support your child. Finally, a huge amount of credit and appreciation must go to each and every pupil. How they have coped with and adapted to the constantly changing circumstances needs to be applauded. I firmly believe that despite the difficulties we face, we all learn from our experiences and can be stronger for them.

After one of the strangest years I am sure any of us has experienced, I do feel we can now have some degree of assurance that schools will remain open into the future. There may well be some bumps along the way and unfortunately we can never guarantee that someone will not have the virus at school leading to close contacts requiring to self-isolate. However, with the vaccine roll out and rapid testing, we can have some element of certainty about what lies ahead and focus on rebuilding our children's the future. We have come an incredibly long way and this is now a time for us to do all we can to ensure the pupils at Stafford Manor High School receive the education they deserve.

Yours sincerely



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Headteacher

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