

Friday 8th January 2021

Dear Parents and Carers (& pupils),

I hope this letter finds you well. The purpose of this letter is to:

1. Our intended approach to coronavirus testing in school and to ask you to complete a consent form for each of your children **DEADLINE Friday 15<sup>th</sup> January**
2. To request parental help to administer Mass Testing
3. Our education offer during lockdown
4. Enhanced precautions in school associated with coronavirus infection prevention
5. Government expectations for examinations in 2021
6. Free School Meals
7. Update you on increased data allowances for mobile phone users - this allows disadvantaged children and young people to access remote education

#### 1a. Coronavirus Testing In Schools

- We are hoping to be able to offer coronavirus lateral flow testing for staff and those students on-site during lockdown and also when all students are invited back into school after lockdown. These tests will contribute to staff and students being able to remain in school safely.
- The test is voluntary and we will not issue a test to any young person without appropriate consent. If you decide testing is not right for your child, your child will still be allowed to attend school unless they develop symptoms.
- Those taking the test will be supervised by trained staff. The 'lateral flow' tests are quick and easy using a swab of the nose and throat.
- For pupils aged 12-18, staff will oversee the swab process.
- For pupils under the age of 12, there will be no testing.

The Science behind the testing approach by Oxford University and Public Health England has shown that the tests are accurate in identifying a case as a PCR test (99.68% specificity). The tests have lower sensitivity but they are better at picking up cases when a person has higher viral load, hence the need to test frequently. Testing will be offered free of charge. Results (which take around half an hour from testing) will be shared directly with students participating. Where participants are under 16, parents or legal guardians will also be informed.

#### 1b. Gaining Consent For Coronavirus Testing In Schools

Please complete the form attached and read the enclosed consent statement. Each of your children will need a separate form to be completed. Please complete the consent form whether you are giving consent or not. By consenting to the testing in school, if your child is in close contact with a student who has tested positive, your child will be able to remain in school as we would continually test them for a further 7 days to ensure they are not carrying the virus. If you choose not to have your child included as part of the programme, and they are identified as being in close contact with a student who tests positive for coronavirus, your child will have to remain off school for 10 days as per national guidance.

Before completing this form, please also read enclosed privacy notice regarding the sharing and storing of personal data, along with the description of the Lateral Flow Tests.

## **CONSENT FORM DEADLINE: Friday 15<sup>th</sup> January**

This deadline is particularly important for the children who are currently in school on our critical worker/vulnerable student programme, please send completed forms back via transport or with your child.

### **2. Your assistance required: Volunteering to help administer coronavirus tests in school**

We may need to recruit and train a team of adults to assist us to administer the tests.

The tests are Lateral Flow Device Tests and involve students self-administering a swab both on their tonsils and up one nostril (see infographic later in the letter). Results are readable in 30 minutes. The roles we need to fill include data collection, processing of samples and test assistants. The hours would be flexible and would vary across a week.

We are looking to staff these positions for the current lockdown period, which we understand will be until the February half-term break, and then the period after this when we are hoping to welcome back the whole school population. If you would like to offer support or have queries about volunteering please contact Debbie Malham at Danesgate or email her on

[debbie.malham@danegate.schools.net](mailto:debbie.malham@danegate.schools.net)

### **3. Education Offer during lockdown**

From this week many students will access remote learning at home.

To ensure that enhanced remote learning is as effective as possible, variety of approaches will be used which may include:

- Google Classroom
- Hard copy work packs
- Emailed classwork for completion

Student engagement will be monitored by Key Workers; please contact your child's key worker with any queries or requests regarding work.

### **4. An update on the enhanced precautions in school associated with coronavirus infection prevention**

During the last week, key staff have been reviewing our school risk assessment to ensure all students and staff in school are safe and supported. This has been completed in response to information received from the government about the new strain of coronavirus. Key features include:

- An enhanced cleaning and sanitation regime; some of which will happen after 1.30pm
- Re-briefing staff and students about the requirement to socially distance and minimise contact;
- Minimising staff attendance on the school site;
- Minimising staff and student movement around the school site;
- Robust internal track and trace procedures;
- Enhanced personal hygiene provision and expectations.

### **5. The government expectations for examinations in 2021**

In his announcement on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> Jan, the Secretary of State confirmed that we will not be asking students to sit SATs and GCSEs this summer. Together with Ofqual, the DfE will consult next week on how to fairly award all pupils with a grade to ensure they can progress to the next stage of their lives. Exams are cancelled but there will still be assessments made which will enable pupils to attain grades for their GCSEs, for our Y11 pupils it is vital that the hard work is maintained throughout this period. Once decisions are made regarding how exams will be assessed, we will respond to this and share with carers/parents. Any Danesgate pupils who were due to sit Functional Skills exams in January will now be postponed until further notice.

## 6. Free School Meals

During the national lockdown, we will continue to provide supermarket vouchers for those FSM-eligible pupils not attending face-to-face education at school. If you have not already done so, there is an explanation on the school website regarding our online “Wonde” system (<http://www.danesgatecommunity.org.uk/news/free-school-meals-letter-to-parents-and-carers>). Should you have any queries regarding FSM or you feel you might be eligible or your circumstances have changed, please contact Julie Nice at Danesgate ([Julie.nice@york.gov.uk](mailto:Julie.nice@york.gov.uk))

## 7. Increased data allowances for mobile phone users

This scheme temporarily increases data allowances for mobile phone users on certain networks. This is so that children and young people can access remote education if their face-to-face education is disrupted. Children with access to a mobile phone on one of the following networks might be able to benefit:

- Three
- Smarty
- Virgin Mobile
- EE
- Tesco Mobile
- Sky Mobile

Other providers may join the scheme at a later stage.

To request extra mobile data, Danesgate will need to collect the following information:

- the account holder’s name
- their mobile number (a number beginning with ‘07’)
- their mobile network
- whether they pay monthly or pay as they go

You also need to read the [privacy policy](#).

Key Workers will discuss this when they next contact yourselves – please provide them with the information should your child require additional data allowances during the period of national lockdown.

Thank you for your support and forbearance during these times, should you have any queries, please liaise in the first instance via your child’s Key Worker.

Kind regards,



Mark Richardson  
Headteacher

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