



Tarka Learning Partnership,
Roundswell Community Primary
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Thursday 17th December 2020

The National Introduction of Coronavirus (COVID-19) Asymptomatic Testing in Schools and Colleges

Dear Parent,

As you may be aware from this week's news headlines the Government informed schools on Tuesday afternoon that Asymptomatic testing of pupils and staff will begin in the Spring term 2021. I met with the Head Teachers of the Tarka Learning Partnership yesterday to plan our approach to this unexpected initiative.

To safeguard the health and well being of pupils and school staff and support as many staff and pupils in school as possible, the Government will be making rapid-result coronavirus tests available to schools and colleges in the new year. This will help identify asymptomatic cases, which make up a third of all cases thus limiting the spread of the virus.

The Government's aim is that testing, along with other infection prevention and control measures such as social distancing, can ensure pupils are given the best chance of face-to-face education.

With a phased approach beginning with secondary school students at the Park Community School in early spring term, testing will be made available to all members of staff and all students. Provision for primary school pupils will be developed later in the term following government guidance.

The Government's approach to testing will be: -

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- Devon Teaching School Partnership
 - DPSCITT
 - Eden Park Academy
 - Fremington Primary School
 - Landkey Community Primary Academy
 - Newport Community School Primary Academy
 - North Molton Primary School
 - The Park Community School
 - Roundswell Community Primary Academy
 - Sticklepath Community Primary Academy

1. For students and pupils as well as the school staff to have daily testing for those identified as close contacts of school staff, students or pupils that have tested positive. This ensures that they do not need to isolate and are able to continue to benefit from high quality, face to face education.

2. For the school staff to have weekly testing; this will help identify those who are carrying the virus without displaying symptoms, reducing the risk of transmission.

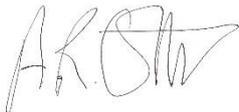
For everyone, testing is voluntary, but those who are eligible for tests (as per point one above) are strongly encouraged to participate to reduce the risk of transmission within schools. In line with routine infection control practice, close contacts who decide not to be tested daily will need to self-isolate in line with the [Stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-or-confirmed-coronavirus-covid-19-infection)

As you can imagine there is a lot of preparation to support the potential level of testing, which in pilot secondary schools was as high as several hundred each day. Schools are expected to employ or use existing staff to carry out such tests and training materials are expected to be received in the coming days. As a Trust we are putting together a detailed plan to support our schools, but being determined our staff have a well earned Christmas holiday, which will enable school staff to better support your child's learning on their return to school.

On return to school in January each school will update parents with the arrangements for testing including how pupil testing is to be administered. As ever we will plan carefully and ensure pupils are well supported through future testing to allow them to enjoy school. Each school will seek your permission for such testing.

I would once again like to thank you for your support and wish you and your family an enjoyable Christmas break and happy new year.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "A. Cotton", written over a light blue horizontal line.

Andy Cotton
CEO

Tarka Learning Partnership