



23<sup>rd</sup> February 2021

Dear Parents/Carers and members of the Piggott Community

**Please read this letter in its entirety, we are asking for your help.**

Yesterday evening the Prime Minister set out the next phase of the Government's response to coronavirus (COVID-19). As part of this 'road map' out of the current restrictions, he announced that education settings should allow full attendance from 8<sup>th</sup> March 2021.

We know that this decision is supported by our school community but for some, understandably, it has led to initial anxiety. Our staff are desperate to be back in school, working face to face with the students. Teaching is much more than the imparting of knowledge or skill. The true gift of working in education is rooted in relationships, friendship, reciprocal learning and belonging to a community. We miss our students and colleagues. We are really looking forward to seeing them when we return next month.

Since the start of the pandemic, our priority has been to ensure that we encourage good mental and physical health for all our school community. We have studied the PHE guidance, listened to the scientists and responded appropriately to all the recommended safety measures. Prior to returning to the site on 8<sup>th</sup> March, our risk assessments will again be updated, and we will ensure that all conduct on site mitigates risk and secures the very best health and safety for all. We will continue to work hard to build confidence and trust in our students and their families.

In January, as per DfE guidance, we set up a small Lateral Flow Testing Centre in the Sports Hall. Over 300 tests have been completed since the start of term and we are extremely proud of the staffing team for the friendly and empathetic environment they have created. Full NHS training has been completed and the work of the centre is reviewed weekly to ensure efficiency and effectiveness.

In the guidance released yesterday evening, the DfE state that students will take coronavirus tests as they return to the classroom from Monday 8<sup>th</sup> March. Schools will have discretion on how to phase the return during the week of 8<sup>th</sup> March and students will be invited to partake in an initial programme of three on-site tests, three to five days apart. Following this, students will receive rapid tests to use twice each week at home moving forward. Full parental consent is being sought prior to any testing and testing is voluntary.

So, we may need to perform well over **four thousand** Lateral Flow Tests on site with a period of a couple of weeks to cover testing for all students three times. This is a huge undertaking and we are asking for your support.

**In order to complete this large amount of testing, in such a short period of time, we welcome any member of our school community who would be able to volunteer their services to support in the testing centre to contact us this week.**



Full training, guidance and PPE will be provided. You would be inducted and supported by a lovely, professional team of staff. We anticipate that the testing window will last for approximately two to three weeks from 8<sup>th</sup> March. Our current testing facility, based in the sports hall, is being expanded to accommodate the increase in testing anticipated.

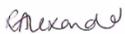
We were overwhelmed by the generosity of time and support offered by our parents and carers in January when the testing was initially announced but many of these volunteers are now giving their time to support the vaccination programme. If you are able to support the school at this time, we would be very grateful.

To volunteer, please contact the Headteacher's PA, Caroline Preston at [prestonc@piggottschool.org](mailto:prestonc@piggottschool.org). Please include your availability over this period.

Thank you so much for taking the time to read this letter and considering if you are able to help us. The positive messages from our parents we receive on a daily basis have really kept our staff buoyant at such a challenging time. Thank you, we have really felt, and benefitted from, the Piggott community spirit.

We look forward to welcoming our students back on to site from 8<sup>th</sup> March and further information will be provided over the coming weeks.

Yours sincerely



Mrs R Alexander

Deputy Headteacher

**Extract from the DfE Guidance to schools published 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2021:**

**Secondary school testing on-site through an Asymptomatic Testing Site (ATS)**

- Secondary schools should offer pupils testing at an on-site ATS from 8 March. Testing and return of pupils can be phased during the first week to manage the number of pupils passing through the test site at any one time. You should offer 3 tests, 3 to 5 days apart.
- You have the flexibility to consider how best to deliver testing on a phased basis from 8 March, depending on your circumstances and local arrangements, but you should prioritise vulnerable children and children of critical workers, and year groups 10 to 13.
- Pupils should return to face-to-face education following their first negative test result. Pupils not undergoing testing should attend school in line with your phased return arrangements. Schools will have discretion on how to test students over that week as they return to the classroom.
- Testing is voluntary. If consent is provided, pupils will be asked to self-swab at the on-site ATS and after 30 minutes they should be informed of their results.



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