

Dear Parents, Carers

January 21st 2021

### RE: Update on Testing

As you may be aware, we presently test staff and students who are in school, and are asymptomatic, once each week using Lateral Flow Tests. If staff or students were in contact with anyone testing positive in school, we had been instructed to test them every day for 7 days as an alternative to isolation. However, this guidance is changing.

Some of you may have seen on the media this week that there will be a change to the COVID-19 testing programme as it stands in its current form. The BBC article detailing the changes can be found here: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-55733327>

Extracts from the letter that school leaders have received from the Secretary of State for Education are given below:

*School and college leaders are playing a key role in setting up COVID-19 testing. Testing remains a vital part of our plan to suppress this virus, and the widespread rollout of regular testing using rapid lateral flow tests is already proving beneficial in finding people with coronavirus before they develop symptoms.*

*We have consistently been guided by experts, and as part of our testing approach we rolled out daily contact testing in schools on the advice of NHS Test and Trace and Public Health England (PHE).*

*Both NHS Test and Trace and PHE have now reviewed that advice, and concluded that, in light of the higher prevalence and rates of transmission of the new variant, further evaluation work is required to understand the impact of daily contact testing, instead of self-isolation for those who have been in contact with a case, to make sure it is achieving its aim of breaking chains of transmission and reducing cases of the virus in the community.*

***In light of that assessment, we are pausing daily contact testing in all but a small number of secondary schools and colleges, where it will continue with detailed evaluation to inform any future resumption and to make sure nobody in the remaining settings is put at any risk. Regular testing of staff should continue and will increase to twice weekly as further reassurance and to break chains of transmission during this period.***

#### Wey Valley Academy

Sian Thomas, BEd (Hons), CEO - AAT

Jon Webb, BA (Hons), Director of Secondary Education

Rob Russell, BEd (Hons), Principal

[www.veyvalley-academy.co.uk](http://www.veyvalley-academy.co.uk)

E [office@weyvalley-academy.co.uk](mailto:office@weyvalley-academy.co.uk)

T 01305 817000

Dorchester Road, Weymouth, Dorset. DT3 5AN

This means that we will no longer use 7 day serial testing of pupils should they come into contact with a positive case of Covid19. If we do have a confirmed case, **all** close contacts will be required to isolate for the mandatory 10 days.

Thank you for your support with the testing programme as it stands now and in the future. As further details emerge in the future, I will communicate with you again.

Yours faithfully



Rob Russell

**Wey Valley Academy**

Sian Thomas, BEd (Hons), CEO - AAT

Jon Webb, BA (Hons), Director of Secondary Education

Rob Russell, BEd (Hons), Principal

[www.veyvalley-academy.co.uk](http://www.veyvalley-academy.co.uk)

E [office@veyvalley-academy.co.uk](mailto:office@veyvalley-academy.co.uk)

T 01305 817000

Dorchester Road, Weymouth, Dorset. DT3 5AN