

20th November, 2020



Dear Parent/Carer

### **Coronavirus update 34**

We've been welcoming a number of students back to school this week following periods of self-isolation (particularly students in Year 8 and Year 11), with several more due back early next week. I'd want to say a heartfelt 'thank you' to all of them, and to all of their families, for making the sacrifices that self-isolation entails – it's not easy not leaving the house *at all* for a fortnight, but of course that is what all self-isolators are required to do.

The good news is that it seems to be working! The infection figures for our city appear to be decreasing, and at the time of writing there have only been two cases in school this week.

### **Lateral Flow testing**

As you will doubtless have heard from your son or daughter, a number of soldiers (23, in fact) from the Royal Engineers were in school for the first part of this week, taking over our Sports Hall as part of the City's mass testing pilot. I have to say they have been superb – helpful, efficient, polite, and all in all a real credit to their regiment!

Altogether the team conducted around 550 tests, only one of which yielded a positive result. I trust this gives everyone in school confidence to know that St Margaret's does not currently appear to be a hotspot for asymptomatic transmission – or at least, it seemingly wasn't on the days the Army was testing.

We're expecting the team to come back into school next week to test everyone again. **If you haven't returned a consent form for your son/daughter to be tested, please could I ask you to do so?** Consent forms (attached to this letter) can be sent back to school with a pupil or (preferably) e-mailed to [testconsent@stmargaretsacademy.com](mailto:testconsent@stmargaretsacademy.com). The more students who get tested, the more we can reduce asymptomatic transmission in school – and that means the safer *everyone* is.

### **HPV vaccinations**

Year 8 families may have been approached directly by our local Vaccination and Immunisation Team recently, seeking parental consent for this year's HPV vaccinations (which are completely separate from 'flu jabs, and any Coronavirus vaccine that may be in the offing). I've received an e-mail from the team leader advising there's a typographical error in the letter and so it's going to be reissued; anything received to date should be disregarded.

### **Inhalers**

Does your son or daughter need an inhaler, perhaps because they are asthmatic? Our Lead First Aider, Mr Taylor, has asked that all children who use inhalers carry a spare one with them. Whilst we have some spare in school, under the current circumstances we're keen to avoid using them if we can. Thank you for your co-operation!

### **Year 11 Parents' Evening**

With a number of Year 11 boys missing Mocks due to self-isolation, we've reluctantly decided to put the Year 11 Parents' Evening back a week. In order to ensure that students have completed their Mock papers and that teachers will be in a position to feedback on their performance, our first **Year 11 Parents' Evening will now take place on Thursday 3rd December**. Please accept my

apologies for any inconvenience this change may cause. With some students still to complete their Mocks, those with papers still outstanding will now take them in lessons, not in the Drama Hall.

As stated previously, we will be trialling some software that allows for the upcoming virtual Parents' Evenings. Feedback from other Liverpool schools that have trialled this software has been very encouraging, and we'll be writing out to Year 11 families with more details next week.

### **Homework update**

Students in Years 7, 8 and 9 have now been given their homework exercise books and should be completing Knowledge Homework in line with the guidance given recently. There are some videos introducing this change to parents (and students) [here](#): I'd encourage you to watch them if you haven't already done so. There's also information about how to use Teams for remote learning – please do have a look if your son or daughter is self-isolating (or absent for any other reason).

### **Autistic Spectrum Disorder**

Is your son or daughter autistic – or do you think they might be? Do you have any questions about how best to support such a young person? The City Council's ASD Training Team is providing a series of virtual drop-in advisory sessions *via* Zoom. They are for parent/carers wishing to talk through any questions or concerns they may have about their child in a private one-to-one setting. Best of all, your son or daughter does not require a diagnosis of ASD for you to book your place.

There are five sessions every school day in December – right up to, and including, the last day of term; each session lasts for 45 minutes, and they start at 9:30am, 10:30am, 11:30am, 1:00pm and 2:00pm. If you'd like to book a session, please e-mail the ASD Training Team directly at [asdtrainingteam@liverpool.gov.uk](mailto:asdtrainingteam@liverpool.gov.uk).

### **Term dates**

It was, perhaps, inevitable that just a couple of days after we provisionally agreed our term dates for 2021/2022, the Government announced an extra Bank Holiday for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee in June 2022. The extra Bank Holiday that's been announced actually falls in the May half-term week, but we're expecting that instead, the number of days schools are expected to open to students will be reduced from the usual 190 to 189 next year. As and when that happens, it's likely we'll agree that an 'occasional day' (an extra day's holiday) will be taken in the Autumn term of 2021.

In short, this means that next year's dates may take a little longer to confirm. But the basic shape of what was published last week is unlikely to change significantly.

### **And finally...**

Thank you for your continuing support! I appreciate that these continue to be testing times for all of us, but over the last 8 months I've come to appreciate more than ever how important it is for schools and parents to work together for the good of our students, your children. Despite the circumstances, please don't be reluctant to get in touch if there's anything we can do to help or support your son (or daughter) – it's what we're here for!

Yours faithfully



Stephen Brierley  
Principal.

12th November, 2020



Dear Parent/Carer

**Everyone living, working or learning in Liverpool can now get a free Covid-19 test**

The more of us who get tested, the more we can stop the spread of Covid-19 in our city.

Liverpool City Council is inviting the young people in our city to take part in this process.

All students in Years 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13, where the appropriate recorded consent<sup>1</sup> is provided, are eligible for the test.

This test involves taking a swab from the back of the throat and nose. This process may be uncomfortable for some people but isn't harmful. In most cases the test will be self-administered, but trained army personnel will be on hand to demonstrate and support.

Liverpool City Council is working in partnership with the NHS and the military to deliver testing at education settings in Liverpool.

We ask that you and your child discuss this to see if it is something you would like to participate in. If the appropriate consent<sup>1</sup> (which can be provided by the student themselves in certain circumstances) is given, students will be tested twice over a period of about 10 days for COVID-19 as part of a national pilot. The results will be fed into NHS Track and Trace. Individual results will also be held by the school and positive results will be provided directly to you or your child.

Anyone who tests positive, using either a lateral flow test or an existing swab test, must self-isolate along with their household immediately in accordance with national guidance which can be found [here](#). Those who test negative will need to continue to follow national guidance which can be found [here](#).

This pilot is being run in phases. Liverpool City Council is working with the NHS and the military to ensure safe and suitable systems and processes are used across education settings.

Further details about the mass testing pilot can be found here: <https://liverpoolexpress.co.uk/covid-mass-testing-your-questions-answered/>

To be able to participate in this pilot please complete the attached consent form and return it to us by Monday 16th November. Pre-16 students should hand completed forms into the School Office; post-16 students should hand completed forms to Mrs Gray.

Yours faithfully



Stephen Brierley  
Principal.

<sup>1</sup> Further information regarding consent can be found at the [NHS website](#) and also at the [CQC website](#)

# PARENT/ STUDENT CONSENT FORM

## Mass Asymptomatic Lateral Flow Testing for Coronavirus/Covid-19

Please discuss this form with your child, then complete this form and return it to school by Monday 16th November 2020. If we do not receive this completed form and recorded consent, your child will not be tested in school.

Students full name (first name and surname):	Home address and postcode:	
Date of birth:	School year:	School form:
<b>Please complete either box below for YES or NO and return the form to the school.</b>		
<b>YES</b> , I give consent to be tested for Coronavirus/ Covid-19	<b>NO</b> , I do not give consent to be tested for Coronavirus/ Covid-19	
Name	Name	
Signature	Signature	
Date	Date	
Any comments:		