

Merton Junior School

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*'Be wise, together we
succeed'*

Tuesday 11th May 2021

Dear Parents/Guardians,

There seems to have been a little confusion surrounding the tests that are available to test for COVID-19 so I hope that this letter will clarify this. The information below comes directly from the Government website

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection#tests-for-covid-19> and <https://www.gov.uk/order-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-tests>)

There are 2 main types of test currently being used to detect if someone has COVID-19:

- Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) tests
- Lateral Flow Device antigen (LFD) tests

PCR tests detect the RNA (ribonucleic acid, the genetic material) of a virus. PCR tests are the most reliable COVID-19 tests. It takes some time to get the results because they are usually processed in a laboratory. **If you, your child or someone in your household have symptoms of COVID-19, you should arrange for that person to have a PCR test.**

LFD tests detect proteins in the coronavirus. They are simple and quick to use. LFD tests are not as accurate as PCR tests in all circumstances, but can detect a similar number of people with high levels of coronavirus as PCR tests. They are mainly used in people who do not have symptoms of COVID-19. LFD tests are being used to regularly test staff working in care homes, the NHS and schools, as well as in community and workplace programmes offering rapid tests to people without symptoms, known as 'asymptomatic testing programmes'.

Lateral Flow Tests can be ordered via this link: <https://www.gov.uk/order-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-tests> but I must emphasise the below –

You can only use this service if:

- *you do not have coronavirus symptoms*
- *you're 11 or older*
- *you have not been told to self-isolate*

- *you cannot get tests from your work, school, college or university (ask them for rapid lateral flow tests)*

Therefore, the Department for Education (DfE) have confirmed that, on advice from Public Health England (PHE), pupils in primary schools and children in nursery settings are not included in the rapid asymptomatic testing programme so Lateral Flow Tests must not be used by pupils attending our school (because they are under the age of 11). The DfE are advising that primary-aged pupils should only be tested if they are symptomatic, in which case their families should follow the guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection and book a PCR test for the child.

As a school, we are able to offer a PCR test kit to a parent or guardian of any of our pupils who becomes symptomatic onsite or if there are significant barriers to testing through the usual routes – please speak to a member of the office staff.

Thank you for your support and understanding surrounding this matter in ensuring that we are all doing our bit to stop the spread.

Kind regards,



Mrs K Reading
Headteacher