

23rd March 2021

Dear Parents/Carers/Guardians,

Re: Testing for COVID-19

Firstly, can we say a massive thank you for all your wonderful support to our schools following the return of children to the classroom.

This return has been really positive and it is clear that our children are enjoying being back at school.

With this, we just wanted to send you all a quick reminder about the importance of testing your children for COVID-19. Obviously, with children returning to school we anticipate that, alongside COVID-19, there will also be other coughs and colds circulating and testing allows us to differentiate between the two.

As you know, there are two types of tests that are commonly used – the rapid tests for children without symptoms and the PCR test when a child develops symptoms.

We use the PCR test to determine whether the symptoms your child has, is because of COVID-19, or for another reason such as a cough or a cold. Using this result, we can then determine whether the bubble your child has been in also needs to isolate. If a child doesn't have this test, then we have to assume that the child is positive and isolate the full bubble.

This means that all of the children in that bubble will miss out on their education because a child hasn't had the test. We appreciate that taking your child for a PCR test may sometimes be inconvenient but really appreciate you supporting us with this. It means that we can continue to ensure that as many children are in school as possible.

Thank you so much for your support again.

Lisa McNally

Director of Public Health

Sandwell