

Cumbria House • 117 Botchergate • Carlisle • Cumbria • CA1 1RD

10 December 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

Re: Lateral Flow Testing (LFT) for COVID19

We're writing to let you know that we are planning to offer Lateral Flow Testing for Covid 19 at the beginning of the new school term in January 2021. This is in advance of the national programme for mass testing, and we are planning to do this with a pilot group of some Cumbrian secondary schools. Solway and Beacon Hill have agreed to be part of this pilot.

The reason we want to offer this is that the Christmas period is likely to see more people coming into contact with each other, potentially transmitting Covid 19 without realising, and increasing the number of cases without any symptoms when children come back to school in January.

By testing children for the virus *before* they re-join their schools' bubbles, we would be able to remove as many cases as possible from circulation, and avoid disruption to lessons later on in the term with further closures of bubbles. Not to mention the health implications of greater transmission in schools, which could lead to a higher rate of infection, and more people becoming seriously unwell.

We'll write to you again early next week, to provide more details about how things will work at Solway and Beacon Hill, but hope you welcome the latest position of our plan now, because it may require some changes to normal transport arrangements on the day of your child's test, including the potential for a request for parents to try to bring children to school. We wanted to advise of this at the earliest opportunity, to maximise time to prepare. Dates are yet to be confirmed but we anticipate tests at both Solway and Beacon Hill will take place for all students and staff on Monday 4th January, before lessons begin. We will confirm this ASAP.

In our communication next week, we will of course provide you with further information and consent letters, without which, we will not be able to proceed with testing.

Any offer to complete a test is absolutely voluntary, and no student would be asked to progress a test without consent.

Thank you very much in advance for your support in this endeavour.

Yours sincerely,

Dan Barton

Assistant Director, Education & Skills

Colin Cox

Director of Public Health

Judith Schafer

Executive Head, Solway and Beacon Hill

