



# Northumberland County Council

**Your ref:**

**Our ref:** CMcE/DA

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**Date:** 15<sup>th</sup> December 2020

Dear Headteacher

We wanted to take this opportunity to write to you following today's announcement in relation to mass testing and regular testing in schools using lateral flow devices (LFDs). We want to reassure you that we are here to support you through this and are looking into what this means for all schools in Northumberland.

We appreciate how exhausted you are and that this is the last thing you need as you prepare to have a break over Christmas. Whilst you will have received an email this afternoon with lots of attachments from the national team leading this (press notice, consent form, poster re mass testing, leaflet re mass testing, template letters to parents, privacy notice on personal data, blog, handbook) there is nothing you need to do pre-Christmas. We are going to digest the information we have received and will understand what this means for your school and how this can be implemented in the new year.

The email you will have received sets out the proposals to provide lateral flow tests at the beginning of January to enable:

1. Secondary schools (including special schools and alternative provision) and colleges to conduct **weekly testing of staff**; helping to identify those who are carrying the virus without displaying symptoms, reducing the risk of transmission. This will be coupled with **daily testing, for 7-days, for those identified as close contacts of workforce colleagues** that have tested positive; this will mean that staff can continue coming into school and college as normal, rather than having to self-isolate, as before.
2. Daily serial testing for **students in secondary school years 11 to 13 and their college equivalents** if they are identified as a contact of a positive case. This ensures that these year groups do not need to isolate and are able to continue to benefit from high quality, face to face education in this critical exam year.
3. As soon as possible after this initial phase, testing will be available for **all other secondary and FE students** who are identified as a contact.
4. From the start of February, tests will be provided to allow **weekly testing for the primary school workforce and serial testing** if they are identified as a contact.

**Wellbeing and Community Health Services Group**

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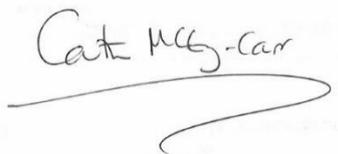


As we have already mentioned, secondary schools do not need to take any action before breaking for Christmas.

You will no doubt have many questions including the implications on staffing, training and the space to be able to carry this out. We want to assure you that our priority is to work through the detail and support you as best we can moving forward.

We will arrange a meeting with you at the earliest opportunity in the new year so we can further discuss what this means for you and your school.

Yours sincerely

Handwritten signature of Cath McEvoy-Carr in black ink, featuring a stylized, flowing underline.

**Cath McEvoy-Carr**  
**Executive Director of Adult Social Care and**  
**Children's Services**

Handwritten signature of Liz Morgan in black ink, appearing as 'Liz Morgan'.

**Liz Morgan,**  
**Director of Public Health**