



Midsomer Norton Schools Partnership

www.midsomernortonschoolspartnership.com

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Dear Parents and Carers

Covid-19 update from Public Health

You may have been aware through press releases earlier today, that there have been some inaccuracies with PCR Covid testing in the South West. In some cases, PCRs have been conducted after a positive lateral flow test and returned a negative result. This has been traced to one particular laboratory in the South West, where there have been errors in processing. This laboratory is no longer being used by the Health Service and therefore the reliability of the PCR test is now as it was prior to September – somewhere close to 98% accurate at detecting Covid-19 infection. Therefore, if you do have a positive lateral flow test at home, you should continue to book a PCR follow-up test which should once again, give you an accurate assessment of infection.

Rates of infection in BANES and Somerset are rapidly rising and schools have seen pupils and staff absence higher than would normally be the case. I have asked all schools to ensure that they follow the government guidelines on outbreaks. This means that when there are 5 positive cases or 10% of the school population (including staff) that have tested positive, new preventative measures must be adopted to prevent the spread of infection. This will include the wearing of face coverings in communal areas in secondary schools and in some case, a return to pupil 'bubbles'.

As indicated above, we have had a number of schools facing rising infection rates. This does have an impact on children, as they may be absent from school, or not working with their normal teachers/support staff. In these situations, we are trying to ensure there is remote learning in place. However, we have higher than normal staff absence with some colleagues being quite unwell with the infection. Therefore, please do be patient with schools as they manage increased infection rates as best they can.

Yours sincerely

Alun Williams
CEO

