

Dear Parents and Carers,

09 June 2021

This letter is to inform you about some important Covid updates and to ask that you, as a parent or carer, give consent for your child to be tested.

I am writing to inform you about the presence of the **new Delta (Indian) Covid variant** in the borough of Merton. This strain of the virus is 40% more transmittable than the Alpha (Kent) variant which we previously saw in our local community. In the past few weeks there has been a rise in positive cases within the local area which has impacted us at St Marks resulting in an increase in positive cases over the half term holiday.

To make sure that we are taking every possible precaution to protect our community we have been working closely with our local Public Health Team and have decided that from **Monday 14th June we will have a mobile testing unit at St Mark's Academy.** The testing unit will **conduct PCR tests on all students and staff** members in the Academy. This will assist us in monitoring and suppressing the spread of Covid 19 within our community. Public Health England describe such testing as surge testing. When performing surge testing all members of the community are tested regardless even if:

- They have no symptoms of Covid-19
- They have been vaccinated for Covid-19
- They have previously tested positive for Covid-19 (Not within the last 90 days by a PCR test)

I have included a link below for some guidance from Gov.UK about surge testing and the benefits of it for you to review:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/surge-testing-for-new-coronavirus-covid-19-variants>

In order to administer the PCR test to your child we will be **asking you to complete a consent form.** I have included the link to the consent form that you need to complete below. There is also a link to this form on our Academy website. We will be giving all students a paper copy of this consent form which they will need to return to their coach. **It is important that all students return both a paper copy of their consent form and the online version. Your child has been given a consent form today, so please ask for this when you get home.**

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=pGcNtDFve0GB0B6WvxpVXN5zBt-oMn9CsuJV2RYJpQFUQlc2UkJNRjVVTFo4R09HQjJOV000TVU1Qy4u>

PCR tests will also be given to pupils of the Academy to take home for the whole household to test. Your participation in surge testing is crucial to identify cases in the community. Information will be provided with the PCR test packs on how to register your results.

Principal Hannah Fahey

I want to reassure you that we continue to place the health and safety of our community at the forefront of all of our daily routines and practices, even within holiday periods. Upon returning from half term we have made sure that all students and staff members in the Academy have had the opportunity to revisit our Covid protocols and routines to ensure that they are practiced with consistency and fluency.

- **We have reintroduced the wearing of face masks in lessons as an extra precaution to protect our community.**
- **We have also incorporated dedicated time into our Coaching programme to reiterate Covid safety routines and watch any demonstrations or read necessary literature. This has also allowed appropriate time for students to ask any questions they may have or to address any misconceptions.**

Thank you very much for the support that you have shown the Academy this academic year I hope that with all of our participation in surge testing surge testing and your support we are able to protect our community and ensure that our students are in the Academy receiving the highest quality of education.

Yours faithfully,



Hannah Fahey
Principal