Biddenham
International School & Sports College
Principal: Mr David Bailey Head of School: Ms Eleanor Grylls

26th February 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

As promised, we are writing to you today with further details about the Covid testing programme for all students. The government is very clear that we must use all of the tools available to us to combat the transmission of COVID-19. These tools range from vaccination, symptomatic testing, improving medicines, self-isolation regulations and non-pharmaceutical interventions like hands-face-space. Asymptomatic testing is a further and critical tool to help mitigate the transmission of COVID-19 and it will help us to:

• identify and help to prevent staff, students and pupils without symptoms from transmitting and spreading the virus unknowingly.
• operate as safely as possible by self-isolating those that are the most contagious as soon as is practical.

Asymptomatic testing is done via simple and quick tests, known as Lateral Flow Device (LFD) tests. They enable us to rapidly test students and staff, without the need for a laboratory. No test is 100% accurate, but the LFD, when done as part of a testing regime is very good at picking up those with high viral loads (i.e. those that are the most contagious). Please see the link here for further details about the LFD tests sent to all parents previously.

All schools are required to offer three LFD tests spaced three to five days apart. This is so students have undertaken some testing in a supervised setting, and have had the chance to familiarise themselves with self-swabbing. Following the three initial tests, students will be able to collect home testing kits from school and start testing at home on a regular basis.

With infection rates still relatively high in our local area we are keen to conduct our testing programme as safely as possible. To enable three tests to be completed for all students whilst providing good quality education we will be starting testing appointment slots next week, running throughout the week beginning the 8th March whilst the remote learning timetable continues. Each student will be given three appointment times, organised in their tutor groups. Students will be required to wear a mask when they arrive on the school site. They will come in for their test only and then go straight home, to avoid any transmission. We will only inform parents of a positive test result, please assume your child's test is negative unless contacted. Please see below for the testing appointments for your child's tutor group.

Tutor group 12/13	**Test 1**	**Test 2**	**Test 3**
	Friday 5th March	**Tuesday 9th March**	**Friday 12th March**
PA	4.00pm	4.00pm	4.00pm

Biddenham Turn, Biddenham, Bedford, MK40 4AZ
Tel: 01234 342521 Fax: 01234 334530
Email: enquiries@biddenham.beds.sch.uk Website: biddenham.beds.sch.uk

In order to conduct the tests we will need consent forms to be completed. These can be completed electronically by following this link, (which is recommended), or paper copies can be printed off and brought in when students attend their first test appointment. We will **not** be able to conduct tests without consent, and we would really rather not have to send students away, so your help with this is much appreciated. Here is a link to our privacy notice (which can also be found on the website) that explains how personal data we collect is processed.

Arrival and travel to school

It is really important that students are on time for their allocated testing slots, to help avoid unnecessary queuing. They should come to the reception area in A Block where they will be directed through a one way system and registration process.

We encourage all students to walk or cycle to school if at all possible. This is by far the healthiest travel option. Should students need to travel by public transport they will need to follow the government guidelines about wearing face masks. We ask that if a parent or carer is bringing their child to school they remain in their cars and if students are walking they must not meet and arrive in friendship groups. Both gates (north and south) will be opened for students to get on and off site within a set period of time.

We know that there is a great deal of information here and appreciate that you may have questions or queries. Please contact the school by email on enquiries@biddenham.beds.sch.uk or call us on 01234 342521 and we will aim to answer your queries as swiftly as possible.

Many thanks, as ever, for your support and patience. We look forward to the 15th March when we welcome all students back to school full time.

Yours faithfully,

Mr D Bailey
Principal

Ms E Grylls
Head of School