

Westlands School

Expect More

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CHH/ELA/Whole School

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Dear Parent/Carer

I hope that your child enjoyed their time at school today. It was wonderful to see the playgrounds full of happy students socialising in their bubbles at break and lunch time and classes full of engaged students eager to learn and make progress. I would like to congratulate our students for such a successful return to school.

As you know, we have been offering pupils lateral flow tests in our onsite testing centre for the past week. So far we have given every child the chance to have a test before they return to school and have started offering the second of their three lateral flow tests. Prior to the return to school, we had some pupils test positive who then went on to have a negative PCR test. This means that their lateral flow test was a false positive.

However, one of our Year 10 students (who had been in school all day) tested positive yesterday evening using a lateral flow test. We do not yet know if this is a false positive or if the test has correctly identified a case of asymptomatic COVID. We therefore have had no choice but to isolate a small number of children that were in direct contact with the student.

This was devastating news for both our students and staff.

We have spent the day trying to find a way of helping these students return to school earlier (should the Year 10 test be confirmed as a false positive), but I'm afraid we have been unsuccessful. The updated government guidelines are clear and the school has no choice but to follow them.

I have been asked by parents today what the school can do to stop this from happening in the future. I'm afraid the answer to this question is simple: very little.

The only way we will be able to reduce the amount of disruption COVID causes for our students is if the whole community joins together, following the rules and regulations designed to keep us all safe.



One of the ways that the staff at Westlands are trying to keep the community safe is by strongly recommending that our students wear masks when they are unable to socially distance. The school cannot enforce the wearing of masks in classrooms and does recognise that some parents feel very strongly that masks shouldn't be used or worn. We will not therefore insist that all pupils wear masks. However, I would ask that those parents who are comfortable with their children wearing masks take the time to discuss their importance with their child tonight.

I have been informed today that some pupils are having long delays waiting for their COVID test results, so I also wanted to briefly update you on why this is happening. The staff who work in our test centre upload all pupil test results to a central NHS website. The NHS then use this information to email parents the results. The NHS system appears to be under some strain at the moment which is causing the delays (or in some cases – no result at all!). There is nothing the school can do to impact this – as once we upload the results we have no idea who has been contacted by the NHS and who hasn't. But, I do want to reassure you that the staff at the test centre contact parents *immediately* if their child tests positive. So, if you have heard nothing after a few hours, it will mean that your child was negative. No news, in this case, is definitely good news!

As I said at the beginning of my letter, it was truly wonderful to see our pupils back on the school site today, learning and spending time with their friends. Hopefully, if we all work together, we will get back to a time very soon where we take this for granted.

Yours faithfully



Miss Honess
Headteacher