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New Siblands School  
*"Achievement, Belonging, Celebration"*

Valuing every child through fostering independence,  
inclusion, trust, respect and support

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29<sup>th</sup> January 2021

**RE: Lateral flow testing in schools and vaccinations for special school staff**

Dear parents and carers

I am writing to update you on our decision making around lateral flow testing in our schools. As you may be aware, the Government requested that schools routinely test staff and pupils in school with lateral flow device (LFD) tests (throat and nasal swabs). However, last week the Government requested that all schools 'pause' the serial testing of staff and pupils and have altered their guidance around testing. The guidance can be read here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/daily-contact-testing-in-schools-statement-from-phe-and-nhs-tt-about-next-steps>

The Government says that because "the pandemic has entered a new phase – the balance between the risks (transmission of virus in schools and onward to households and the wider community) and benefits (education in a face-to-face and safe setting) for daily contact testing is unclear. In light of this changing situation, we now recommend that the rollout of daily contact testing within schools is paused."

There has been a lack of clarity on the efficacy, reliability and regulatory approval of LFD tests (of all kinds). We have now presented all our findings from the pilot testing of staff that we did recently to the Board of Trustees, who are responsible for decisions on risk. That meeting has now occurred and the Board has decided, based on risk assessments and our trial information, **not to continue with testing** in our schools from here on.

Meanwhile, the Government has supported the roll out of vaccination for special school staff. I am pleased to tell you that staff are now beginning to receive the vaccination from this week.

We have no further information at this stage regarding the Government's outline plans to see schools open more widely from 8<sup>th</sup> March, but will update you as soon as we are able.

Thank you to our parents and carers for your strong support of our schools at this exceptionally challenging time. We have greatly appreciated the many positive messages of support and thanks.

With best wishes

Andrew Buckton

CEO Enable Trust