

SCA/BDA

12 February 2021

Dear Parent/ Carer

### **COVID-19 – mass testing in Gosforth Group schools**

Dear Parent/Carer,

I wanted to write to you personally to explain how North Gosforth Academy is going to proceed with the introduction of Covid 19 Lateral Flow tests at our school. We realise that there has been a lot of debate surrounding these tests in the media, so I want you to be as informed as possible. At the moment, the government has asked schools to test students when they return to school and to test staff every week. They asked schools to not start the testing of 'close contact students' until further research has been completed.

We work tirelessly to keep our school as safe as possible for pupils and staff and the government believes that these tests will help pupils and staff remain in school safely. Up to one third of people who have coronavirus experience no symptoms. Gosforth Group has taken the decision to participate in the government's testing programme to ensure we can minimise the spread of COVID-19 in a timely manner, and enable us to continue to deliver education services safely and securely across each of our academies. The test is voluntary, and pupils can withdraw at any point, but I would encourage those who are offered a test to take it.

Testing kits have been received from the government to allow us to undertake the testing and since the start of term we have been setting up appropriate testing centres at each of our four schools. A trained workforce has been established to carry out the testing and we have already started the testing of staff and the students who are accessing the critical worker/vulnerable provision. While we do not yet know when schools will reopen, at present, it is still the government's intention that all secondary aged students undergo asymptomatic testing using lateral flow tests before they return to school. All consenting students will be tested twice, three to five days apart.

**Steve Campbell** Principal

**Hugh Robinson** CEO

Dudley Lane, Seaton Burn, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE13 6EJ

T +44 (0)191 236 1700

E [admin@northgosforth.co.uk](mailto:admin@northgosforth.co.uk) W [www.northgosforthacademy.org.uk](http://www.northgosforthacademy.org.uk)

Attached are a couple of documents for your information and attention. These include a privacy statement regarding how we intend to use student and staff personal data during the testing process, and an additional information sheet. Participation in the testing programme is entirely voluntary, but if you wish your child to be tested a consent form must be completed before a test can take place. Please can you click on the [link](#) to complete the consent form by Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> February. If you give consent this is valid from the time you give consent for the duration of the testing process.

Once we have further information about how and when school will reopen we will communicate our plans with you for testing all consenting students. Please note that we may only be able to give short notice of your child's testing dates to allow us to test as many students as possible prior to the reopening date.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Campbell', written in a cursive style.

Steve Campbell  
Principal