



South Gosforth First School

'Roots to grow and wings to fly'

Monday 22nd March 2021

Use of Lateral Flow Device Tests for COVID-19

Dear Parents and Carers,

We have had several discussions with families over the last couple of weeks about the use of Lateral Flow Device (LFD) tests and so we would like to clarify the information around their use and limitations.

Like staff in school, many of you are now self-testing for COVID-19 at home using LFDs because you are key workers or cannot work from home. Adults are also eligible to LFD tests if they are parents or carers of school aged children and we have been made aware today that several of you have accessed these from the test centre at Newcastle Great Park.

While LFDs are very useful in identifying cases in people who are asymptomatic (do not have any COVID symptoms), they are not as accurate as a Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) test. PCR tests are those which are available at a test centre or through the post but are analysed in a lab and the results sent to you about 24 hours later. Regular use of LFDs in asymptomatic people will, in most cases, identify people who are unknowingly infected and so can help stop transmission. However, LFD tests will not pick up every positive case and so a negative result cannot be relied upon to rule out COVID-19 infection. Therefore, if you or anyone in your household has any symptoms of COVID-19, you will need to book a PCR test through a test centre and then wait for the result to be sent to you. This is the same for the staff at work, we are all self-testing with LFDs twice a week, but if we have symptoms, we must book a PCR test and wait for the result, regardless of what the LFD test tells us. We are also maintaining all of the other measures which are in place to stop the spread of COVID-19 as these continue to be crucial in keeping everyone safe.

Please continue to follow school's previous advice regarding symptoms and testing and do not use LFD tests for anyone who is symptomatic. If you are in doubt, please contact us and we will do our best to advise you. We appreciate that the COVID-19 information has now reached 'overload' and so your support in trying to follow it and support school is greatly appreciated. Thank you all.

Rob Adams

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