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Date: 04/03/2021

Dear parents/carers

As you will be aware, our children and young people are returning to their respective educational settings from Monday 8 March, which is excellent news. I recognise the enormous pressure closing schools has put on everyone involved in learning and I would like to thank you all for the many sacrifices you have made to help keep cases low in Torbay.

I know we are all keen to see the return of all children and young people to the classroom. We must now make sure we do everything we can to make the transition as smooth as possible. Primary schools will open their doors to all children from Monday 8 March. Secondary schools and further education settings may open in a phased way as students need to undertake Covid-19 testing on return. You will be advised by your school or college when to return.

From Thursday 4 March, we are introducing regular Lateral Flow Testing (LFT) measures for secondary and college students. Lateral Flow Tests give a result after 30 minutes and are used to detect people with Covid-19 who do not have symptoms. Students will have already been invited to attend school or college to have a test. Their first three tests will be within their education establishment. We will then move to home testing.

Testing is important because staff, students and pupils without symptoms could be carrying the virus and may spread it to others. One in three people with Covid-19 shows no symptoms. Regular testing will support secondary schools and colleges to operate as safely as possible. Schools have been successfully carrying out asymptomatic testing of staff since January. This has worked well.

When you receive your home test kits we are asking that you work with us to ensure that these tests are undertaken every Sunday and Wednesday evening after 6pm. This will help us identify cases quickly and stop the virus spreading. You will be given further instructions by your school or college about how to carry out testing.

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If you require this in a different format or language, please contact me.



Lateral flow testing for households and bubbles of school pupils and staff will also start to be available over the coming weeks. The testing can come through different mechanisms.

- through your employer if they offer testing to employees
- at a local test site
- by collecting a home test kit from a test site
- by ordering a home test kit online

The Local Authority is currently establishing a collection system for home testing. We anticipate that this will be available from the week commencing 21 March 2021.

In the interim you can order home test kits through the national system via the following link:

[Order rapid lateral flow home test kits](#)

It is really important that if you have Covid-19 symptoms you and your family members continue to isolate and book a Covid-19 test straight away. You can find information about this via the following link: [Information on testing if you have symptoms](#). Lateral Flow Testing devices should **not** be used if you have symptoms.

We have strong working relationships with all our schools and college in Torbay and are confident that Covid-safe measures are in place to ensure the safe return of all our children and young people.

It is only by working together that we will beat this virus, I urge you to continue to remain vigilant and to rigorously follow all the restrictions still in place to protect us. **The virus has not gone away** and we need our cases to stay low to stay out of lockdown.

Yours sincerely



Dr Lincoln Sargeant

Director of Public Health