



<b>Our Ref</b>	MV/KB
<b>Your ref</b>	
<b>Date</b>	25 <sup>th</sup> January 2021
<b>E-mail address</b>	Milorad.Vasic@halton.gov.uk

Dear Parents and Carers,

The Department for Education has recently announced that it will start a programme of asymptomatic Covid-19 testing in primary schools, school-based nurseries and maintained nursery schools.

You may be aware from the media that up to one in three people who have Covid-19 have the virus without symptoms so could be transmitting the virus unknowingly. Tackling the pandemic requires identifying asymptomatic, infectious individuals. By testing, we will help to reduce the spread in schools. Schools are strongly encouraging all staff to take the tests.

The test is the Lateral Flow Device (LFD) which have been widely used to detect COVID-19 in asymptomatic individuals. This test is more sensitive with higher viral loads, there is a risk of returning a negative result when viral loads are low (e.g. in the early stages of infection). This is why Public Health England recommend two LFD tests 3 to 4 days apart, or regular testing, to enhance detection by picking up any cases which were not detected during the first test and to catch any new infections.

The Local Authority has run a number of sessions with schools to provide some guidance and primary school staff will be able to take the tests every week from 25 January 2021 at the earliest and the two community testing sites remain available for staff.

Staff who decline to participate can still attend school if not symptomatic.

People who decline to participate in this testing programme need to follow the usual national guidelines on self-isolation.

Anyone should get a PCR test if they show symptoms. LFT are not appropriate for those with symptoms.

These tests are another weapon in our fight against the spread of this virus along with following the lockdown rules, washing hands, wearing a face mask and maintaining social distancing.



I would like to end this letter with a plea that everyone who can keep their children at home should do. Our schools are under tremendous pressure at the moment to maintain safe working practices and provide a place for key worker children and vulnerable children. All the Head teachers recognise the difficult situation families are under and they will accommodate as many children as possible but schools are now at capacity or have several members of staff off, which is reducing capacity and may not be able to offer your child a place. I would ask that you support the collective effort to reduce the spread of the virus by keeping children at home and respect the school's decision if they are unable to provide a place.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Mil Vasic'.

Mil Vasic  
Strategic Director, People