



Ark Charter Academy

17th December 2020

Dear Parent or Guardian

Participation in the Hampshire and Isle of Wight COVID-19 saliva testing programme

We are pleased to share the news that your child's school is taking part in an exciting new COVID-19 testing programme from next term.

The test is very simple and involves collecting a sample of saliva in a plastic pot. Free weekly tests will be offered to **all pupils** and **all staff** at the school. You will receive a testing pack which contains pots and a leaflet that shows your child how to complete the test at home.

We will be sharing more details with you soon about how this process this will work. Please do look out for this. A website will also be launched in the New Year which will have lots more information about the programme.

What is the testing programme?

The HIOW testing programme is funded by Government and aims to benefit our local communities and help to reduce transmission of the virus. It follows a successful pilot programme in Southampton, where pupils and staff in four schools and at the University of Southampton were tested on a weekly basis. The pilot showed, along with other extensive studies, that saliva testing is effective in identifying people who are infectious and are most likely to transmit the disease. It is easy to do and is not invasive. In January, testing will be rolled out in a phased way to all secondary schools and further education colleges across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight and offered to all pupils, students and staff.

Lessons run by the team from LifeLab at the University of Southampton will be taking place in school to explain this process to our children and young people in a fun and engaging way.

Why is this important?

Knowing who has COVID-19 is vital to stopping its spread.

We hope that you are as excited as we are about the potential for this test to help us manage the risk of COVID-19. Alongside all the other measures we are taking to control the virus, it will help us to keep our communities safe and well and keep our schools open.

Testing is not compulsory, but I strongly encourage you take part. We will be in touch soon with further details of how your child can take part in this exciting programme.

Yours sincerely


Mrs Fiona Chapman
Executive Principal



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National Winner
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