

**28<sup>th</sup> January 2021**

**Saliva Testing Update**

Dear Parents and Carers,

First of all, I feel I need to address the announcement made by the Prime Minister yesterday afternoon. It seems that the very earliest students will return to school will be March 8<sup>th</sup>, and this may well be primary schools not secondary schools. Another six weeks, at least, of home learning is maybe not what you wanted to hear and definitely not what we wanted. Thank you for supporting your children with their home learning. We are trying to find the right balance between the amount of work we set and the amount of time the students have. We are also trying different ways of keeping you up-to-date over how the students are getting on with their work. We will send out a further survey at the end of the week to ask your views on the current system. Our last survey showed that 75% of parents felt we were setting the right amount of work, with the other 25% split evenly between too much work being set and too little work being set. So trying to find the balance is proving quite tricky.

There are a range of events scheduled for after half term; parents' evenings, mock exams, options evening. There are even more events in the Summer Term. I have reviewed the calendar and will be discussing how to run all events remotely (if we cannot run them face-to-face) with the Leadership Team next week.

So on to more positive matters. I am really pleased to announce that the University of Southampton has issued Applemore with a start date for saliva testing. For those staff in school, we will start testing from next Monday (1<sup>st</sup> February). We hope that student testing will be rolled out the following week. At first, it will only be available to those students who are already in school. However when all students return to school, we will be able to offer saliva testing every week.

I would like as many staff and students as possible to complete the test weekly. This makes the whole school so much safer for all of us. The saliva test is very accurate and picks up COVID-19 much earlier than Lateral Flow Testing.

Students will need to watch the 'How to' video concerning saliva testing. The video has already been uploaded to the Student Hub and can be found by following this link:

<https://applemorecollege.sharepoint.com/sites/StudentHub/SitePages/Resources.aspx>



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At present, for those students currently in school, the test collection days will be years 7 and 8 on Monday and years 9, 10 and 11 on Thursday. There will be a collection box in the bubble classroom. We will arrange for this box to be collected and taken to reception for 9.00am.

When all students are back in school, the collection days will remain the same; Monday for years 7 and 8 and Thursday for years 9, 10 and 11. There will be a collection box for each year bubble in their year bubble area. This will be taken down to reception for 9.00am on their collection day.

I am hopeful that saliva testing will prove effective and when all students return to school, it will lead to the early identification of positive cases allowing the school and year bubbles to remain open.

Returning to the topic of remote learning, we will send the survey out in the next few days and share the findings with you next week. In the meantime if we can support in any way, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alan Chipping', with a horizontal line underneath.

**Mr Alan Chipping**  
Headteacher