



from Tom Lawson MA (Oxon), Headmaster

16 December 2020

Dear Parents,

It is with tremendous gratitude and pride that I say we have managed to get through to the end of this term. My sincerest thanks go to those families who have been able to stick out the long and challenging term and also to those who were obliged to switch to remote learning. Without your support, it would not have been possible.

Next term will restart fully on the scheduled date, that is the evening of 3 January 2021 for boarders and the morning of 4 January 2021 for day pupils. We plan for full, in person, schooling with continued Covid-secure measures at the start. As the term progresses it may well be possible to selectively allow greater freedoms, in sport for example.

As mentioned in my previous letter, to assist our efforts to identify asymptomatic cases early and minimise transmission causing disruptive ripples of self-isolation, we ask that **all parents support our new weekly Medatest instant antigen test.**

At the start of term:

- **Day pupils and UK boarders**
 - You will be sent two test kits. The second one is just in case you get an inconclusive result, otherwise please keep it safe for your child's use during the term.
 - Please take the test on the weekend before you return to school. If you receive a positive test result, **do not come into school**. Please report a **positive** result to ECCCOVIDtracking@eastbourne-college.co.uk and we will support and advise you while you **arrange** an NHS test to confirm the result. By this process of confirmation, we ensure that you are not disrupted for more than a short time if the test is a false positive.
 - Instructions are included with the test kits. There is further data on the antigen test and Medatest available on their website [here](http://www.medatest.com) (www.medatest.com). A video showing the procedure will be available in due course.
- **Overseas boarders**
 - If you are travelling into the UK and taking advantage of the test-and-release scheme, then you will be free to return to school as soon as you have completed your five-day isolation and received a negative test result in keeping with the rules of the scheme. Therefore, you can safely return to school after that period and matrons will organise weekly antigen testing during termtime.
 - If you are staying in the UK or in a country with a travel corridor, then **please report to matron immediately on your return** who will help you take the beginning-of-term test there and then.
 - Further information is available on the website [here](#).

Thereafter:

- We will provide you with further tests for each weekend and ask day parents to administer the tests, following the instructions above and reporting any positive result to ECCOVIDtracking@eastbourne-college.co.uk. Boarders will be tested in house on the weekend unless they are going home when they should take a kit with them.

Parents will be billed in advance for the first six tests and charged £13.20 for any extras that are needed. If you would like to purchase more now, for example for family members, there is the ability to do so using this link [Additional Antigen Test Kit Order Form - Eastbourne College Parents](#). Please order no later than Monday 21 December. These will be posted to you on 22 December or alternatively you can come and collect them from reception before 4pm on 22 December.

You may have seen on the news that the government plans to roll out similar tests for teachers in the maintained sector and children who test positive. We will take advantage of that scheme when it comes on stream if we can, but at this point I am very glad we have moved faster and will have mass testing of the school community up and running ready for the start of term.

I am aware there is a diversity of opinion on the right strategy for the College in our aim to continue as fully as possible during the pandemic. The SMT, College Doctor and I have been examining testing options over the course of the last eight months and we would not have settled on this option if we were not convinced that it is the best balance of effectiveness and practicality. I am convinced that by giving us an early warning we can ensure that self-isolation, now reduced to ten days, is much more selective and effective, thus many fewer pupils will face the disruption we saw this term.

I know that I am asking parents for faith and further support but with the whole community of pupils and staff taking part we can really change the game and see out this virus.

I wish you a very happy Christmas, and look forward to seeing your children back in the new year eager to enjoy a healthy and productive 2021.

With very best Christmas wishes,



Tom Lawson
Headmaster