***‘Individual Growth, Individual People’***

 **Head Teacher: Mrs M A Tyers**

London Road, Balderton, Newark, Notts NG24 3AL

Telephone: 01636 682255

Email: office@newarkorchard.notts.sch.uk

Website: www.newarkorchard.notts.sch.uk

31 December 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

**Mass Testing in Special Schools**

As a school we **will** be signing up to the national mass testing programme. This is because we believe this will help to keep your children as safe as possible and the school open. There is a lot for us to put in to place and we need time to do this properly.  In line with the government’s guidance we think it is sensible to offer staff testing. We think this is best done **before** all pupils return to school.

The majority of pupils **WILL NOT** be in school next week. Below, I have included an overview of what will be happening in school next week.

Special Schools have been given ‘flexibility’ on the return to face to face learning during the first week of the spring term. All schools have been granted an additional INSET day from the government for staff to be trained in the process of both ‘mass’ testing and ‘serial’ testing.

 **Monday** will be classed as an **INSET day**. No pupils will be in school in order for staff to complete the training and for the practicalities to be sorted. A testing room will also be identified and prepared on Monday. All tests will arrive in school on Monday, along with PPE and additional information.

All staff (with consent) will receive the first of the two tests either Monday or Tuesday

**Tuesday 5th Jan- Friday 8th Jan** The majority of pupils will be at home for the remainder of the week. Only pupils where both parents are key workers and those identified by SLT, following a risk assessment process, will be in school. SLT will be in contact with those families on Monday by 1pm, if you do not receive a call please assume your child will be at home until Monday 11th January 2021 and will be offered remote learning by their teacher.

**All children who were classed as Clinically extremely vulnerable in the first lockdown during the summer term will not be back in school whilst Nottinghamshire is in Tier 4**

On **Thursday &** **Friday** all staff (with consent) will receive the second of the two tests. We will then have a clear picture of the staff available for week commencing the 11th January.

On **Friday** the timetable for testing pupils (with consent) will be confirmed. This will take place on Monday 11th January, before pupils go into class.

No pupil will be forced to be tested and testing will not take place without parental consent. If your child is over 16 and has the capacity to make their own decisions, we will work with them and you to agree consent. Further correspondence will be sent out on Monday explaining the testing process and seeking consent for eligible pupils.

We believe that offering mass testing as a school is an additional way of helping us to reduce the risk of the virus in school and our wider communities.

We fully appreciate that this is late notice for you all, however, the government guidance was not available until late yesterday. I feel confident that we will be open for all pupils who are not classed as Clinically extremely vulnerable with a safe workforce on Monday 11th January.

With very best wishes for a happy and healthy 2021.

Margot Tyers

Head Teacher