



SCHOOL UPDATES & REMINDERS

HOLY WEEK:

Sunday marks the start of one of the most special weeks in the Church's calendar: Holy Week. From Palm Sunday, we journey with Jesus during the hours leading to His crucifixion and death. It is a week of real challenge and beauty, within which the fundamental aspects of our Christian faith are laid bare for us in the scripture throughout the week. It is always a great opportunity to have our pupils in school throughout this period, so from Monday, pupils will be sharing in special collective worship experiences in which they will engage with the stories, celebrations and challenges of Holy Week. We look forward to sharing with you via our school Twitter feed (@whickhamstmarys) what we get up to throughout the week.

LENT UPDATE:

Thank you so much for your efforts this week with our Lenten appeal to support the Diocesan Refugee Project. If you haven't had the chance to send in your offering yet, please feel free to do so by **Monday 29th March**.

Each class has been asked to bring one specific item (1 item – or as many as your child can carry in to school!) as follows:

Reception – Toiletries (shampoo, shower gel, soap, deodorant and toothpaste)

Y1 – Biscuits (single packs – as these are easier to distribute)

Y2 – Tinned tuna

Y3 – Chickpeas

Y4 – Tinned tomatoes

Y5 – Rice (not microwavable)

Y6 – Sugar (standard 1kg bags preferably)

LENTEN FUNDRAISING:

Next week, pupils will be taking part in a whole-school activity for which we would be very grateful to receive donations to support projects locally and globally (in Kenya and India) which are championed by the Parish of Our Lady and St Philip Neri Gift for Life group.

Pupils will be coming together on Thursday to share the Dance Re-unite dance which they have been learning since their return to school – alongside many other pupils in Gateshead Schools – and then to take part in 40 minutes of activity: 1 minute for each day of days of preparation during Lent.

As such, all pupils are asked to come to school in their PE kit on Thursday 1st April (Y3 will also need to wear PE kit on Tuesday for their cricket session).

We would ask that families wishing to donate to the cause either make a donation online via SIMS Pay (<https://www.sims-pay.co.uk/Home>) – *Lent Appeal 2021* – or by sending money in to school, in a clearly labelled envelope, by Wednesday 31st March.

Please feel free to spread the word among friends and family!

LAST DAY OF TERM:

Please note that the last day of term for all pupils is **Thursday 1st April**. All pupils will return to school on Monday 19th April.

REMINDER – CONTINUING COVID-19 PROTOCOLS:

Please share these protocols with all adults involved in providing care for your child.

If your child displays any of the following COVID symptoms:

- A high temperature
- A new, continuous cough
- A loss or change of the sense of smell or taste

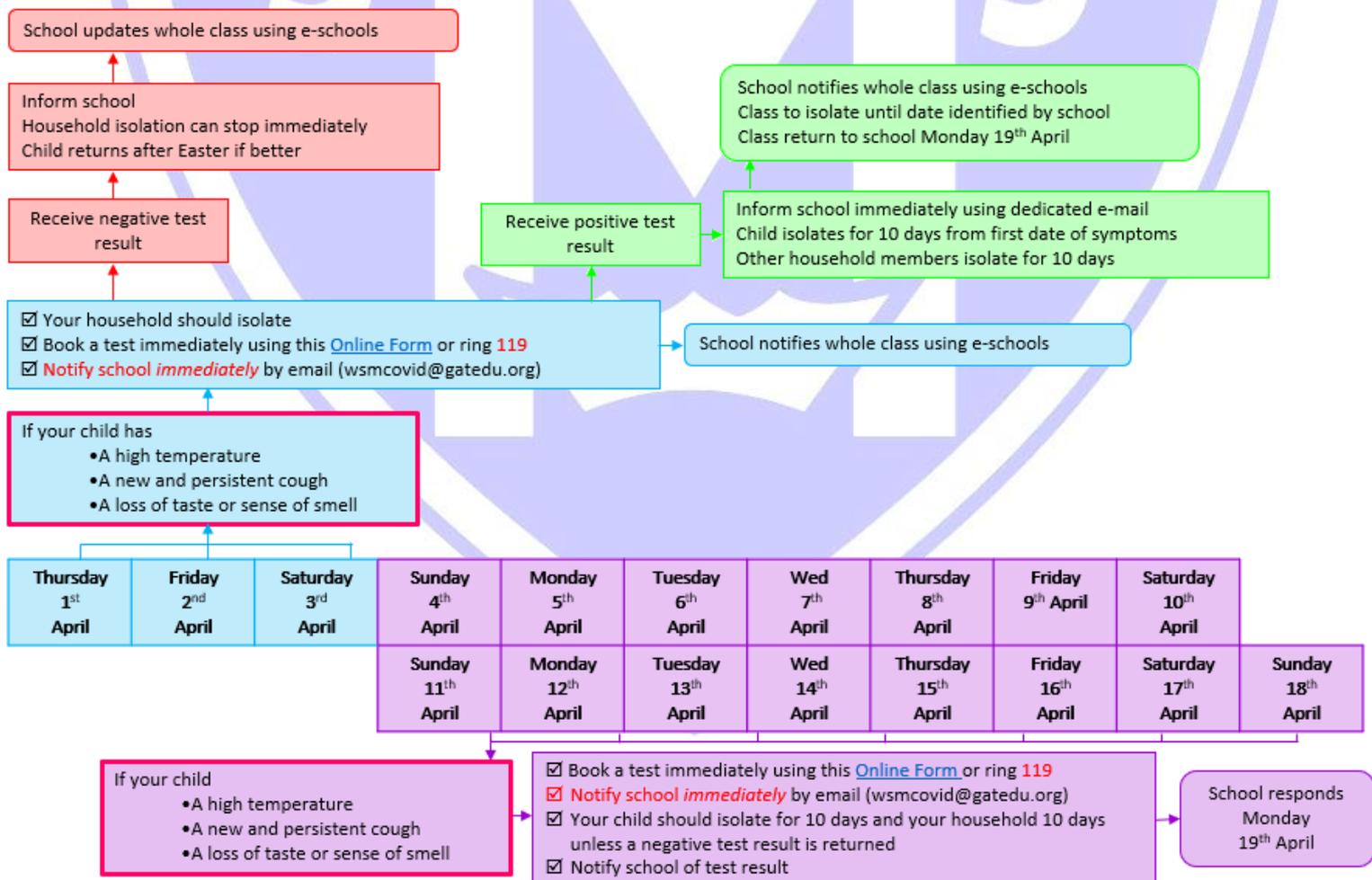
it is vital that you:

- **Keep your child and any siblings/household members at home** and isolated;
- **Book a test**. Tests can be booked online <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test> or by ringing 119 if you have problems using the online service;
- **Notify school immediately** by emailing wsmcovid@gatedu.org.

You are strongly encouraged to book a test at a testing centre – rather than a postal test – to avoid the delay of critical information to contacts.

If any member of your household or **any close contact that your child has outside of school** develops symptoms, **your child must isolate immediately** and **must not come to school** until a COVID-19 test outcome is received by the symptomatic case.

PROTOCOLS FOR EASTER BREAK:



REMINDER – ASYMPTOMATIC TESTING FOR COVID-19 FOR PARENTS AND CARERS:

Undertaking regular, rapid coronavirus (COVID-19) testing helps reduce transmission of the virus. Parents and other adults in households with children at school or college, who do not have symptoms, can now access regular, rapid coronavirus (COVID-19) testing. This includes childcare and support bubbles.

Tests are fast, easy and completely free. There are different ways for a household, childcare or support bubble to collect their test to take at home, twice-weekly:

- through your employer, if they offer testing to employees
- by collecting a home test kit from a local test site – anyone aged 18 or over can collect 2 packs of 7 tests
- by ordering a home test kit online – please do not order online if you can access testing through other routes, this frees up home delivery for those who need it most

You can find more information here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/rapid-lateral-flow-testing-for-households-and-bubbles-of-school-pupils-and-staff>.

If you have any queries about the tests, and you live in England, please call 119 (free from mobiles and landlines). Lines are open every day from 7am to 11pm.

Children of primary school age (and below) without symptoms are not being asked to take a test. Testing is voluntary, but strongly recommended to all who are eligible. Alongside the vaccine, washing hands, wearing face coverings, and maintaining social distancing, rapid testing plays a vital role in reducing transmission rates. Getting into the habit of regular testing as part of our everyday lives will help us all to play our part and do what we can to protect each other.

Lateral flow tests should **not** be used by anyone who has coronavirus symptoms. If anyone in your household has coronavirus symptoms they should get a test to check if they have coronavirus via the gov.uk website (here: <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>) or by ringing 119.

If you have been advised by your child's school or childcare setting that your child has been identified as a close contact of a positive coronavirus case they must isolate for 10 days, and you must follow the advice given by the school or childcare setting.

If your child is isolating because they have been identified as a close contact of someone with coronavirus they cannot return to the school or childcare setting before the end of the 10-day isolation period even if they have a negative test result (either PCR or lateral flow).

Lateral flow test kits should **only** be used by the person they were issued to. If you have a child in secondary school who is testing themselves at home the tests must not be used by anyone else in the household e.g. a sibling or parent.

Similarly, if you have access to lateral flow tests through your workplace you should not use these to test your children at home.