

13 January 2021

## **NHS Test and Trace: COVID-19 Testing for Students**

Dear Parent or Guardian,

You may have heard that testing for those without coronavirus symptoms is beginning across the country using new, quicker COVID-19 tests known as 'lateral flow devices.' This letter is to help give you more information about the testing programme in our school.

Approximately one third of people who have coronavirus do not have symptoms (asymptomatic). We can now offer rapid testing for Coronavirus in school, with results within 30 minutes. This will help find infections early, even if the individual does not have symptoms, and reduce the risk of transmission.

As your youngster is currently still attending school, we would like to offer testing to them. We are sharing the information with you so that you can decide if you would like your youngster to have the test, this is your choice.

### **How the tests work**

Those taking the test will be supervised by trained staff and volunteers. The lateral flow devices are easy to undertake, using a swab of your nose and throat. Your youngster will be given verbal assistance during the process. Results take approximately 30 minutes to process; the school will inform the student of a positive test result. Parents or legal guardians will also be informed via a text and/or email. Tests are free of charge and I enclose a leaflet with further information.

### **Plan for testing**

We will be offering two initial tests to all students who are currently in school. This will be within the next two weeks and the tests will be 3 to 5 days apart. Staff members will be tested weekly.

In addition, any staff member or student who has come into contact with positive cases in our school can be tested daily for seven days to allow them to remain in school rather than isolating at home.

### **What if my child tests positive?**

A positive rapid test will mean that your child will need to go home straight away and take a PCR test, which school will provide. These tests are more accurate and need to be sent away to a laboratory (instructions are in the kit). This test will check if your youngster is truly infected. Until you receive the results, your youngster and everyone who lives in the house will need to stay at home and self-isolate. If the PCR test returns a positive result, they will have to continue to self-isolate and follow the guidance from NHS Test and Trace. If the PCR test is negative, everyone in the household can carry on as usual and do not need to isolate any longer. Please ensure that you notify school of the result of the PCR test.

### What happens if the test is negative?

While a small number of pupils may need to repeat the test if the first test was invalid or void for some reason, pupils who test negative will be able to stay in school and resume their activities as normal. Parents will be informed of negative test results via text/email.

A negative rapid test does not guarantee that your child is not infected, as there may unfortunately be small numbers of children who have the virus that will be given a false negative result. This means it is important that anyone being tested still follows the national advice about keeping distance, washing hands and wearing a face covering when required.

### What if staff or students have been in close contact with someone in [school/college] who tests positive?

The staff member or student will be notified that they are a close contact by the school. If close contacts agree to be tested each day for a maximum period of 7 days, and they test negative every day, they will be allowed to remain in school. There may be instances where close contacts are also contacted by NHS Test and Trace. In this instance they should notify NHS Test and Trace that they are a close contact through school and are participating in daily contact testing. On a Saturday and Sunday, students must isolate as per the guidelines. If the end of the 7 day serial testing falls on a Saturday or Sunday, a final test will be taken on a Monday morning.

If they do not want to take the tests, they will need to self-isolate as per the national guidelines. The option of daily testing does not apply to household members or close contacts of a positive case outside of school, who will still need to self-isolate.

### What if my child develops symptoms?

**Rapid testing is only for people without symptoms.** Anyone who has one of the three main symptoms of coronavirus (a high temperature, a new, continuous cough and a loss or change to sense of smell or taste) should stay at home with those they live with and request a PCR (lab test) through the national <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test> or by calling 119.

If any of the following applies, children should not come to school and should follow national guidance and self-isolate at home:

- If a child has symptoms and are waiting to take a test or receive a result
- Someone in their household is waiting to take a test or receive a result
- Has a positive test result or lives with someone who has a positive test result

I hope this letter provides you with sufficient information about the testing programme to complete the online consent from <https://tinyurl.com/y5uy62qu>. **Separate consent forms must be completed for each youngster in school.** Please contact school if you have any further questions.

Yours faithfully



Zoe House  
Headteacher