

4th January 2021

Dear Parents/Carers,

Coronavirus (COVID-19) rapid-result testing in school

We hope you are safe and well and want to wish you all a Happy New Year.

From January 2021, the government will be making rapid-result coronavirus tests available to schools and colleges using a phased approach, starting with secondary schools and colleges. This testing is being introduced to help safeguard the health of staff and students and to ensure people do not need to self-isolate unnecessarily.

This letter outlines details of the approach to testing in school.

Who is eligible for tests and how often will tests be administered?

All students will be eligible for 'rapid testing' on return to school. Two tests are administered at least 3 days apart. This is in order to identify students who may be asymptomatic.

Once rapid testing has been completed, if staff and students are close contacts of an individual within school who has tested positive for coronavirus, they will be eligible for daily testing, known as 'serial testing'. Close contacts would be tested once a day, at the start of the day, for seven school days. Any new positive cases during serial testing will reset the clock for serial testing to the start of seven school days.

Is testing mandatory?

In all cases, **testing is voluntary**; however, the government is strongly encouraging those eligible for testing to participate to reduce the risk of transmission in schools.

If a close contact of a confirmed case within school decides to not be tested daily, they will need to self-isolate in accordance with national guidance for 10 days, beginning from the day the individual tested positive. Students and staff can choose to opt out from daily testing at any time and self-isolate.

How will consent for testing be obtained?

As participation in both routine and serial **testing is voluntary**, consent will be required from staff, students or students' parents / carers, as appropriate. Below is the link to the consent form which we ask you to complete by **12pm on Thursday 7th January 2021.**

https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=jem3QMUZmEyGRuANLqs3V1ZxBqMMh01LtX7BR_pdmWIURU1QQk9IWkhZU0pSUktFNIZTQ0tSRzRMQy4u

11 to 15-year-olds may self-swab with supervision of an appropriate member of staff if they have parental consent. Students aged 16 and over may self-swab, provided the school is satisfied that they are able to consent to their own medical treatment without a parent or guardian present.

How will tests be administered?

The school has been provided with lateral flow tests which produce a result in 30 minutes, do not require a laboratory to process, and require minimal training to operate. Along with the testing kits, we will also be provided with the appropriate PPE.

Mr J Henshaw, Executive Principal BA (Hons), PGCE, NPQH **Ms L Newton**, Associate Principal BA (Hons), MCCT

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All tests will be conducted at a dedicated testing site on the school premises, which will be set up in line with NHS guidance. The school workforce will be supported by temporary staff to deliver the testing programme, and all staff and volunteers will receive appropriate training.

The majority of swabbing will be conducted as a self-test, meaning students will conduct the test on themselves. In some cases, trained personnel will swab individuals, e.g. where the individual may not be able to administer a self-test due to their needs.

What happens if a student tests positive for coronavirus?

If a student tests positive for coronavirus following a rapid test, they will be taken to a quiet space where a member of staff can talk to them about their results and discuss the next steps. During this conversation:

- The student will be told that they need to take a confirmatory polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test, available at testing centres.
- The member of staff will explain how long the coronavirus symptoms may last for and reassure the student that, for most people, symptoms will be mild.
- The student will be told about the support available to them to learn from home.
- The student will be told they need to follow national guidance and self-isolate for 10 days.

The student's parents / carers will also be contacted to arrange for the student to be collected. During this call, the school will inform the student's parents that their child needs to take a confirmatory PCR test. Upon collection of the student, a member of staff will remind the student and their parent / carer that they need to let the school know about the result of the PCR test. Parents should notify the school of a PCR test result by **calling the school office on 01782 667650 and leaving a message.**

What happens if a student tests negative for coronavirus?

If a staff member or student tests negative following a rapid test, they can continue with their normal activities until their next rapid test is due.

Please note that a negative test result does not remove the risk of transmission. In some cases, someone who has tested negative may still have the undetected virus and be infectious. It is therefore essential that staff and students continue to follow good hygiene practices and social distancing measures, in line with the school's protective procedures.

If a member of staff or student has symptoms of coronavirus, but they test negative following a rapid test, they will be required to self-isolate until they get the result from a PCR test.

How will testing data be protected?

A small amount of processing personal data will be required as part of the testing programme. All data will be protected in line with the school's Data Protection Policy. We have also updated our relevant privacy notices, which are available on the school website, along with a copy of this letter.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the testing programme, please contact your son's/daughter's house leader in the first instance.

Yours sincerely,



Mr J Henshaw
Executive Principal



Ms L Newton
Associate Principal