



4<sup>th</sup> January 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

### **COVID Testing**

As previously communicated, COVID Testing for those without coronavirus symptoms is being rolled out across the country in education settings using new, quicker COVID-19 tests known as 'lateral flow tests'. The aim is to identify asymptomatic COVID carriers and protect our community by reducing the spread of the virus.

Along with all our current protective measures, these tests will help staff and students to remain in school safely. Up to one third of people who have coronavirus experience no symptoms. By testing we will help to stop the virus spread and help to keep our school open as safely as possible. The test is voluntary, but we would encourage everyone to take it.

We are planning to initially test all staff and consenting Year 11 and 13 students from Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> January 2021. This will ensure that staff and these year groups can return safely for their exams and face-to-face lessons week beginning 11th January. We aim to test Years 7, 8, 9, 10 & 12 students week beginning the 11th January, prior to their return on Monday 18th January. We will be writing to each year group separately regarding when and how the testing will take place.

A follow up test will need to be taken within 5 days of the initial test.

Those taking the test will be supervised by trained staff. The 'lateral flow' tests are quick and easy using a swab of your throat and nose. For under 18s, staff will oversee the swab process, but students will complete the test themselves.

**If you are happy for your child to be tested, please fill in the Microsoft Form via [this link](#) by 3pm Wednesday 6th January 2021.** Please note that if your child is identified as a contact of a student that has tested positive and we do not have the consent to complete the lateral flow test, they will need to self-isolate for the full 10 days, as per Government guidance.

An instructional leaflet with further information can be found [here](#), and we ask that you discuss this with your child prior to their test.

Positive results will be shared directly with staff and students participating. Where participants are under 16, parents or legal guardians will also be informed. If positive, the student will need to be collected from site to self-isolate. You will need to book a PCR test via the usual means (details can be found in the FAQs section at the end of this letter). Once the school site reopens for onsite provision and following a positive case, we will identify students who have had direct and prolonged contact with the positive case and continue to test these students daily. If you have not consented for your child to participate, then we will be asking for your child to be collected from site and they will be required to self-isolate for the full 10 days.

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***Headteacher: Mr A. Fitzpatrick***

The rapid test validation studies have been conducted by Oxford University and Public Health England, they were shown to be as accurate in identifying a case as a PCR test (99.68% specificity). The tests have lower sensitivity but they are better at picking up cases when a person has higher viral load, hence the need to test frequently.

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **What if a student tests positive?**

Participating staff and students who test positive will be informed about their results individually. Where participants are under 16, parents or legal guardians will also be notified. Guidance on safe travel and additional precautions will be provided along with test results.

Students will need to take a further 'PCR test' (similar to those done in local and regional testing sites) on the same day (or as soon as possible). If ordering a PCR test yourselves, they should choose to visit a drive-through test site if possible, as it is faster than requesting a home test.

During this time while they wait for the PCR result (via text / email) they will need to self-isolate.

If the PCR test returns a positive result you will have to self-isolate and follow the guidance from NHS Test and Trace. More information regarding a student testing positive can be found [here](#).

### **What happens if the test is negative?**

They will be able to stay in school and resume their activities as normal. A student will only be told if they test positive on a 'lateral flow' test, so if you do not hear you can assume it was negative. A small number of students may need to repeat the test if the first test was invalid or void for some reason.

### **What if a close contact at school tests positive?**

A close contact of someone in school/college who has tested positive for COVID-19 will be able to return to school if they agree to be tested once a day for 7 days and the test is negative. If they do not want to take the test, they will need to self-isolate as per the national guidelines. This does not apply to household members or close contacts outside of school who will still need to self-isolate. Further details will be provided at the time, but if you would prefer to self-isolate instead of doing daily testing, you can.

### **What if my child develops symptoms?**

This testing programme at school is for people with no symptoms. If your child develops symptoms at any time (such as a high temperature; a new, continuous cough; or a loss or change to their sense of smell or taste) they must immediately self-isolate and book a test by calling 119 or visiting <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>.

Thank you for your ongoing support.

Mr T Fitzpatrick  
Executive Headteacher

Mr M Roberts  
Head of School

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