

19 March 2021

Dear Parents/ Carers,

To repeat what I said in my brief video message last Sunday, it has been great to welcome pupils back to school and we have genuinely been extremely impressed by the way they have returned. The vast majority have done brilliantly with the lateral flow device (LFD) testing in school as well as following all of the other measures that help keep us all safe.

Pupils have now had a chance to take up to three LFD tests and we will now discontinue testing in school apart from in exceptional circumstances. This Friday we are issuing pupils in Years 7-11 their own test kits to take home and use at home. They will each be offered two boxes, each of which contain three tests. Sixth form students will be offered their test kits next Monday 22 March.

This will enable pupils, with your supervision, to test twice a week for the rest of this term and before they come back to school for the summer term. We suggest that they test on Sunday evening and Wednesday evening each week. They could vary this but they should space their tests three days apart.

Testing pupils/students at home

We understand that each child has individual needs. Many children will adapt to testing becoming part of their routine; others will find it more challenging. Taking part in testing is voluntary and all children will be able to attend school whether they take part or not.

The test kits comprise of three tests and an instruction booklet – an additional instruction booklet was given to your child with the test kit (**v1.3.2 must** be used – the one with no illustration on the front). For guidance on using the test kits you could also watch the step by step [Youtube video](#).

The result of each test needs to be reported using the NHS Test & Trace self-report website: <https://www.gov.uk/report-covid19-result>. **Please also report any positive result to us, the school, as soon as possible.**

If a pupil has a positive test result, they will need to stay home, self-isolate and book a PCR test to check the result. They and your household would need to self-isolate for ten days. If the result of the test is unclear (void) they will need to do another one.

Taking part

Taking part in testing is voluntary and all pupils will be able to attend school whether they do so or not. However, we are strongly encouraging all pupils to take part in the national testing programme. This is because up to one in three people who have COVID-19 can spread the virus without knowing, because they have no symptoms. We can reduce the

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spread by carrying out tests at home twice every week, so this is about protecting others. If you have not consented to in school testing, it's important to read the [privacy notice](#) to understand what will happen with your data.

Home testing for all your family

NHS Test and Trace announced last week that all adults in households with school and college age children without symptoms can now also access regular rapid coronavirus testing. These test kits for other family members can either be collected from a test site or ordered online, as set out below. They will not be issued by us here at school.

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

- 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: <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, please call 119 - lines are open every day from 7am to 11pm – or for in-school queries, our testing lead is Mr Joab Forte.

Best wishes



James O'Connell
Principal

Some frequently asked questions

What type of tests will be used?

We will be sending home Lateral Flow Device (LFD) tests. They are a fast and simple way to test people who do not have symptoms of COVID-19, but who may still be spreading the virus.

The tests are easy to use and give results in 30 minutes.

Further information: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/understanding-lateral-flow-antigen-testing-for-people-without-symptoms>

Are LFD tests accurate?

Lateral Flow Devices identify people who are likely to be infectious. These individuals tend to spread the virus to many people and so identifying them through this test is important.

These tests have been widely and successfully used to detect COVID-19 in asymptomatic individuals and are approved by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA). The speed and convenience of the tests supports the detection of the virus in asymptomatic individuals, who would not otherwise have got tested.

The tests are highly specific, with low chance of false positives. They are also very sensitive and are able to identify the majority of the most infectious yet asymptomatic individuals. Extensive evaluation has been carried out on the tests and it shows that they are both accurate and sensitive enough to be used in the community for screening and surveillance purposes.

It is important to remember that these tests are only an aid to help stop the spread of the virus and you should continue to follow other guidance such as on wearing face coverings and social distancing.

How are LFD tests different to PCR tests?

There are 2 main types of test to check if you have coronavirus:

- polymerase chain reaction (PCR) tests check for the genetic material (RNA) of the virus in the sample - you send the sample for processing at a lab
- lateral flow device (LFD) tests detect proteins called 'antigens' produced by the virus - LFD tests give rapid results, in 30 minutes after taking the test.

How will personal information and test results be shared?

When pupils take a Lateral Flow test, they need to report the result. This is so that their test result can be traced.

They will need to tell the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC):

- child's name

- child's test result
- the reference number on the test Kit

They will also need to tell the school or college their test result if it is positive. Under UK law, a child's school can collect and store test result data because it is in the 'public interest'.

Schools and colleges will only share information with the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) if the test kits used are found to be faulty. If this happens, DHSC will use our information to contact people who used the faulty tests, so that they can be tested again.

When someone reports test results online, they are sharing information with DHSC. DHSC may share the information with your GP, local government, NHS, and Public Health England. This is so that they can offer health services and guidance if someone needs to self-isolate. They might also use data anonymously (a person's name or contact information) to research COVID-19, and improve our understanding of the virus.

[What if a child cannot tolerate a swab down their throat, perhaps due to their disability?](#)

A child or young person may find it difficult to take a throat swab due, for example, to their having difficulty in understanding instructions, needing to keep their mouth open during the period of swabbing or they are having a strong gag reflex. In such cases, where a combined nose and throat swab is not possible, a nose swab from both nostrils can be taken. Similarly, if a nasal swab is not feasible, a throat swab alone will suffice.

[Help and support is available](#) for students, parents and carers, including instructions in different languages on how to test and report the results and a video showing you how to take the test.