



24th February 2021

Dear Parents, Carers and Students

COVID-19 testing for Staff and Students

You may have heard that testing for those without coronavirus symptoms began in school's in January using new, quicker COVID-19 tests known as 'lateral flow devices'. Up to one third of people who have coronavirus are asymptomatic (displaying no symptoms). This letter is to help give you more information about the next phase of the school testing programme when students begin to return from 8th March.

Plan for testing

As outlined in Mr Woods' letter today, during the first two weeks of re-opening, students will be offered three Lateral Flow Device (LFD) tests onsite spaced three to five days apart. This is so students have undertaken some testing in a supervised setting and have had the chance to familiarise themselves with self-swabbing before moving to home testing from 22nd March. Further details and kits for home testing details will follow. All school staff will be accessing home testing from 8th March.

The onsite testing programme will be facilitated by St Nicholas staff and external providers, with all personnel trained to the required Government standards.

By testing we will help to reduce the spread in school through asymptomatic transmission. Anyone experiencing symptoms should continue to follow the current guidance to not attend school, isolate and book a test, see further details below.

How the tests work

The lateral flow tests are quick and easy to undertake, using a self-swab of the nose and throat. Results (which take around half an hour from testing) will be shared directly with the nominated contact specified on the consent form.

School will inform the student of a positive test result immediately. Where participants are under 16, parents or carers will also be informed. The student or parent will also receive a text/email notification of a positive or negative result from the online NHS system.

Consent

Prior to testing, we require consent which can be provided by completing the Microsoft Form via the link below. This same link is also included in the letter from Mr Woods and on the Covid-19 page on the website. Please complete one consent form for each child you wish to participate in testing **by 12 noon on Monday 1st March.**



https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=TQCEKBxgKE67QeEw_TROKYdnPCV7JArMUTP91ctZxUMUJZVzc1SU5KUFPDWTNHUjVBQUNVRUc2Ww4u

For pupils and students younger than 16 years - this form must be completed by the parent or legal guardian. Pupils and students over 16 who are able to provide informed consent - can complete this form themselves, having discussed participation with their parent / guardian if under 18.

For any pupil or student who does not have the capacity to provide informed consent - this form must be completed by the parent or legal guardian.

Consent is only required for on-site testing not for testing your child at home. A consent form needs to be completed for each individual child. If your child has been attending school since January, we would be grateful if you can complete the consent form again.

We recognise that the self-swabbing part of the test may cause significant concerns for some children and young people with SEND and their families. Some of these concerns may be alleviated by discussing them with school and agreeing strategies to help reduce anxiety and putting in place any reasonable adjustments (if the individual has a disability). Parents and carers may want to look at the Mass Testing Guidance for Specialist Settings for further information - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-full-opening-special-schools-and-other-specialist-settings/mass-asymptomatic-testing-in-specialist-settings>

For further information please refer to the FAQ's below. Also attached are Data protection FAQ's, a privacy notice and a guide on how to do a test.

We will support our staff and students throughout, but please contact us if you have any questions.

Yours sincerely

Fleur MacCready

Mrs Fleur MacCready
School Business Manager

Testing FAQ's

What if my child tests positive?

If a student tests positive on a lateral flow device, they will be informed immediately by school and will need to leave school as soon and possible and take a further 'PCR test' to confirm the result. This should be on the same day or as soon as possible afterwards.



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.

What happens if the test is negative?

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

What if staff or students have been in close contact with someone in school who tests positive?

The staff member or student will be notified that they are a close contact by school. Parents or Carers will be contacted to arrange collection of their child as soon as possible and students will be expected to self isolate for 10 days in line with Government guidance.

What if my child develops symptoms?

This testing programme school is for people with no symptoms. If your child develops symptoms at any time (including 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>.

Does my child need to be tested if they have already received a COVID vaccination?

Yes, it is recommended that they continue to access the testing programme in school.

When can my child return to school if consent is not provided?

Whilst testing is strongly encouraged, it is voluntary. Therefore, if consent is not provided, your child is still able to return to school on the date specified for their particular year group.

What if my child has recently had a COVID test prior to school opening?

It is recommended that your child is still tested as any previous test result is only relevant for that particular day.

IN OMNIBUS LABORA