

[Insert Date]

NHS Test and Trace: COVID-19 testing for Staff and [Students/Pupils]

Dear Parent or Guardian,

You may have heard that testing for those without coronavirus symptoms is beginning across the country using new, quicker COVID19 tests known as 'lateral flow devices'. This letter is to help give you more information about the testing programme in our [school/college].

Up to one third of people who have coronavirus are asymptomatic. By testing we will help to reduce the spread in school and college settings through asymptomatic transmission. I am therefore strongly encouraging those returning to [school/college] to be tested.

Plan for testing

We will be looking to test all staff and secondary school and college age [students/pupils] as they return after the Christmas break, with priority given to exam year groups and those undertaking external vocational and technical qualifications in January.

In addition, any staff member or student who has come into contact with positive cases in our [school/college] can be tested daily for seven days to allow them to remain in [school/college].

How the tests work

Those taking the test will be supervised by trained staff and volunteers. The lateral flow tests are quick and easy to undertake, using a swab of the nose and throat. Results (which take around half an hour from testing) will be shared directly with the individual participant. The [school/college] will inform the [pupil/student] of a positive test result. Where participants are under 16, parents or legal guardians will also be informed. The [pupil/student] will also receive a [text/email] notification of a positive or negative result from the online NHS system. Tests are free of charge and I enclose a leaflet with further information.

What if my child tests positive?

If a pupil tests positive on a lateral flow device, they will be informed immediately by [school/college] and will need to take a further 'PCR test' to confirm the result. This should be on the same day or as soon as possible afterwards. [School/college] will be able to provide these PCR test kits to perform at home.

During the time while waiting for the PCR result (via text/email) they will need to 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.

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/college] and resume their activities as normal. Pupils will be informed of negative test results via text/email. Where participants are under 16, parents or legal guardians will also be informed.

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/college]. 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/college]. 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/college] and are participating in daily contact testing.

What if my child develops symptoms?

This testing programme at [school/college] 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>.

We will support our staff and pupils throughout, but please contact us if you have any questions. You can contact the office by [insert contact details].

Yours faithfully,

[Insert headteacher or college principal name]