

4th January 2021

NHS Test and Trace: COVID-19 testing for students

Dear Parent or Guardian,

We are working to keep our school as safe as possible. You may have heard that testing for those without coronavirus symptoms is beginning across the country using new, quicker COVID-19 tests known as 'lateral flow tests'.

Along with the other protective measures we are taking, these tests will help 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 I would encourage everyone to take it.

We will be offering testing to students in the Academy who want to participate from the week starting 4th January 2021.

I enclose an instructional leaflet with some more information on the testing (see link directly below).

[How_to_do_your_test_COVID_19_instruction_leaflet_for_schools.pdf](#)

If you are happy for your child to be tested, please fill in the form below and the consent statement (one consent form per student) via the following on-line survey:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeL7NLRKJzNbNpr7EjkyDSMGzGWQwr5dAf0QEEJ671kkf19RQ/viewform?vc=0&c=0&w=1&flr=0>

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

Results (which take around half an hour from testing) will be shared directly with the students participating. Where participants are under 16, parents or legal guardians will also be informed via the email and phone number provided on the consent form.

We know these tests work - in validation studies 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.

Testing will be offered free of charge.

What if a student tests positive?

Participating 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). Schools will be able to provide these PCR test kits to perform at home or you can go to www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test or call 119 to book a follow-up

test yourself if you would prefer. If ordering a PCR test yourselves, you 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) the students will need to self-isolate and remain at home.

If the PCR test returns a positive result you will have to self-isolate and follow the guidance from NHS Test and Trace.

What happens if the test is negative?

The student 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 from us then 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 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 this 7 day daily testing then 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 <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>.

We will support our students fully throughout this, but please contact us if you need this information in any other language or format, or if you have any questions. You can call the office on 0191 428 2700 or email office@stjosephs.uk.net.

Yours faithfully,



Mr P Mitchell

(Headteacher)

Privacy Notice:

<http://www.stjosephs.uk.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/St-Josephs-Catholic-Academy-Covid-Testing-Privacy-Notice.docx.pdf>

