

5th January 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

NHS Test and Trace: COVID-19 testing for staff and students & home learning during school closure

I hope that you and your family had an enjoyable Christmas break.

If your child is classed as vulnerable or if you or your partner is a key worker, then your child will return to school this week.

All other students are expected to engage fully with their home learning during the school closure so that they keep up with their education.

As before, a great deal of planning and risk assessment has gone into ensuring that our school continues to be as safe as possible for students and staff, in line with latest Government and Public Health England guidance.

We will continue to take decisions in the best interests of our students, working with you and keeping you informed every step of the way, whilst we follow Government rules and advice.

Information relating to NHS Test and Trace: COVID-19 testing for staff and students

You may have heard that testing for those without coronavirus symptoms is beginning across the country using COVID-19 tests known as 'lateral flow tests'.

Along with the other protective measures we are taking, these tests can help staff and students 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.

However, we are participating as a school and I would encourage all students and staff to take part as well.

We will be testing all staff and students who want to participate from week commencing 11th January 2021.

Alongside this letter, I would encourage you to read this Government instructional leaflet with more information about the tests themselves.

If you are happy for your child to be tested, please:

Fill in the consent form enclosed and return to the school **as soon as possible** via email to **laura@goodappleindependent.co.uk**

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.

Results take around half an hour from testing and will be shared directly with staff and students participating.

Parents or legal guardians will also be informed.

The Government has shared information with us from Oxford University and Public Health England, which have indicated the tests are as accurate in identifying a case as a 'PCR test' (99.68% specificity). The tests have lower sensitivity but are considered 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.

I hope that the information in this letter is helpful and clear. Please do ensure you complete the Consent Form attached, if you are happy for your child to take a COVID-19 test. Please do this as soon as possible. If you have any questions, please do also email these to **laura@goodappleindependent.co.uk**

Yours faithfully

Natalie Myers

Natalie Myers

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). School 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. 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.

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 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 (England, Wales and Northern Ireland) or 0300 303 2713 (Scotland) or visiting <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>.

COVID 19 - Remote Education - Safety online

We will be using SLACK for our online learning platforms during this period. You should have been sent a link to join the secure site and given access to all appropriate learning areas.

We will also frequently communicate with students and parents.

If you would prefer your Childs work via e-mail or post, please let us know as soon as possible, so we can get this in place.

The link below regarding Coronavirus (COVID-19): support for parents and carers to keep children safe online may be useful:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-keeping-children-safe-online/coronavirus-covid-19-support-for-parents-and-carers-to-keep-children-safe-online>

If you have any concerns at all then please contact the office for advice and clarification on the procedures we have in place to support your child.