

Ref: keh/cjm/typing/Covid19/testingJan21
31 December 2020

Dear Parents

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

We continue to work to keep our school as safe as possible. The Department for Education announced on 17 December that testing for those without coronavirus symptoms is beginning in secondary schools this term using quicker COVID-19 tests known as 'lateral flow tests'. As a school we believe that it is prudent to take this opportunity to test our students and staff, and have put in place arrangements to allow all students to have two tests before the full resumption of their on-site provision.

Along with the other protective measures we are taking, these tests will help staff and 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 testing all students attending the Vulnerable Students and Key Workers Hub who wish to participate in the week commencing Monday, 4 January 2021.

We currently anticipate that they will take their first test on the afternoon of Tuesday, 5 January and a second test on the afternoon of Friday, 8 January. As the students are on site attending the Hub, they will simply be asked to attend the testing area at the appropriate time. Parents will only be contacted in the eventuality that a student tests positive.

If you are happy for your child to be tested, please fill in the enclosed consent statement (one per student) and associated registration form. Students will need to bring the completed forms with them when they arrive to attend the Hub on Tuesday, 5 January. No test will be conducted without both forms being completed.

Those taking the test will be supervised by trained staff. The 'lateral flow' tests are quick and easy using a swab of the nose and throat. For under 18s, staff can oversee the swab process, which will be undertaken by the students themselves. No person should take a test if they have tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 90 days as it is highly likely that they will return a false positive.

Results (which take around half an hour from testing) will be shared directly with staff and students participating. Where participants are under 16, parents or legal guardians will also be informed of any positive results. Any student testing positive will be asked to take an additional confirmatory PCR test, which will be explained to them and parents at the time, if applicable.

The NHS are confident that 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.

If you have any questions please do contact us on Monday, 4 January, using email or by phoning the school.

Yours sincerely



Chris McAree
Headteacher