

Lateral Flow Orient Gene COVID-19 testing in school for students

Dear Parent/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 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 everyone is encouraged to take it.

An instructional leaflet with more information is included on the website.

If your child is in Y7-11 and you are happy for them to be tested, please complete the consent statement (one per student) located on the School website. Students in Sixth Form are able to self-consent and will be asked to complete a registration form on the day of their test.

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

Results, which take around 15 minutes from testing, will be shared directly with staff and students participating. Where participants are under 16, parents or legal guardians will also be informed.

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 pupil 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). Go to www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test or call 119 to book a follow-up test. If ordering a PCR test yourselves, choose to visit a drive-through test site if possible, as it is faster than requesting a home test.

During this time while you wait for the PCR result via text / email, students will need to self-isolate.

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

What happens if the test is negative?

Students 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 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>.