

Monday, 11 January 2021

Dear Parents / Carers,

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 new, quicker COVID 19 tests known as 'lateral flow devices'. This letter is to help give you more information about the testing programme in our school.

Along with the other protective measures we are taking, testing will allow us to take further measures to help you and other staff members to remain in school. 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 to be tested.

Initial return to term testing

We have been preparing to test all staff and secondary school and college age students as they return after the Christmas break, with priority given to exam year groups and those undertaking external vocational and technical qualifications in January.

Further testing

In addition, school staff will be tested weekly for the remainder of the spring term. Any staff member or student who has come into contact with positive cases in our school can be tested daily for seven days to allow them to remain in school.

How the tests work

Those taking the test will be supervised by trained staff and volunteers. The lateral flow device 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. Where participants are under 16, parents / carers or legal guardians will also be informed. The staff member / 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 someone tests positive?

If someone tests positive on a lateral flow device test, they will be informed immediately by school 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. The school will be able to provide these PCR test kits to perform at home.

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 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 participants may need to repeat the test if the first test was invalid or void for some reason, participants who test negative will be able to stay in school and resume their activities as normal. Participants will be informed of negative test results via text/email. Where participants are under 16, parents / carers or legal guardians will also be informed.

What if staff or students have been in close contact with someone in school who tests positive?

The staff member or student will be notified that they are a close contact by the school. If close contacts agree to be tested each day for a maximum period of 7 days, and they test negative every time, they will be allowed to remain in school that day. 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 and are participating in daily contact testing.

If they do not want to take the tests, they will need to self-isolate as per the national guidelines. The option of daily testing does not apply to household members or close contacts of a positive case outside of school, who will still need to self-isolate.

What if my child develop 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 or visiting <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>.

To assist us with the administration, we require all parents / carers or legal guardians to complete the [consent survey](#) whether they provide their consent or not. You will also need to read the accompanying [privacy notice](#).

Please note that as part of this process, you will also need to use the online tool '[Lite Registration](#)' to register your test. This is where an individual test subject (i.e. Student or staff member) registers online. Schools and colleges will need to ensure that individuals do this, which may require staff supervision and involvement. You register at this link: <https://test-for-coronavirus.service.gov.uk/register-kit/register-rapid-test>. Individuals can register at any point in the process. However, it cannot be earlier than 24 hours in advance of the test and no later than 24 hours after taking the test.

We will support our staff and students throughout, but please contact us if you have any questions. You can call the office on 0208 422 4675 or via email at covid@rooksheath.harrow.sch.uk.

Yours sincerely



Mrs M Manderson
Headteacher