

6<sup>th</sup> January 2021

## **NHS Test and Trace: COVID-19 testing for students**

Dear Parent/Carer,

As a parent of a student attending our Essential School, we wanted to reassure you that we are continuing to work hard to keep our school as safe as possible. Therefore, in line with government guidance, we will be testing weekly all staff and students currently on site, who want to participate, beginning this week.

The DfE have asked us to communicate the information below regarding the implementation of testing within our school.

You will 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. The test is voluntary, but I would encourage everyone to take it if at all possible.

An instructional leaflet is attached with further information from the NHS regarding the [self-swab](#) test.

If you are happy for your child to be tested, please complete the registration form and provide your consent by clicking on the link [Lateral test consent form](#). Please complete one form for each child for which you are responsible.

Those taking the test will be supervised by our trained staff. The 'lateral flow' tests are quick and easy, using a swab of your nose and throat and are self-administered by the student.

Results (which take around half an hour from testing) will be shared by email/text. 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 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). We will be able to provide these PCR test kits to perform at home or you can go to [www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test](https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test) or call 119 to book a follow-up test. If ordering a PCR test yourselves, please choose to visit a drive-through test site if possible, as it is faster than requesting a home test.

During this time, while students wait for the PCR result they 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 Team.

### **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 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 do so.

### **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, not attend school, 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>.

We will support students throughout this process, but please contact us if you need this information in any other language or format or if you have any questions. You should email [covid@iscaexeter.co.uk](mailto:covid@iscaexeter.co.uk) with your queries please.

Yours sincerely,



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