

January 2021

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

Dear Parent or Carer,

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.

Up to one third of people who have the 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.

Plan for testing

We will look to test all staff and students as they return to school, with priority given to exam year groups and those undertaking external vocational and technical qualifications.

In addition, 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 tests are quick and easy to undertake, using a swab of the nose and throat. For under 18s, staff can oversee the swab process. The school will inform the student of a positive test result and where participants are under 16, parents or carer will be informed. The text and email address registered on the Consent Form will receive a notification of a positive or negative result from the online NHS system. Tests are free of charge.

There is lots of information available relating to the testing programme, which can be found on our school website at www.ecgbert.sheffield.sch.uk

If you are happy for your child to be tested, please fill in the Electronic Consent Form, which can be accessed via your Edulink account. Paper copies of the form are available – if you choose to fill in a paper form then these should be completed and returned to the school office.

If you have any questions, which cannot be answered using the information provided on the school website – please email enquiries@ecgbert.sheffield.sch.uk

Please note that if you do not provide consent, your child will not be able to access the testing programme at school.

If you wish to decline consent, please let us know by emailing enquiries@ecgbert.sheffield.sch.uk. This means that we will not contact you to chase up your consent in the future.

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.

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.

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?

While a small number of students may need to repeat the test if the first test was invalid or void for some reason, students who test negative will be able to stay in school and resume their normal activities. The mobile number and email registered on the Consent Form will be informed of the negative test.

What if a close contact at school/college tests positive?

We will notify parents if a student has been identified as a close contact. If close contacts agree to be tested once a day for a maximum period of 7 days and they test negative every day, they will be allowed to remain in school. There may be instances where close contacts are also contacted by NHS Track and Trace. In this instance they should notify NHS Track and Trace that they are a close contact through school and are participating in the daily contact testing.

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, or visiting <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>).

We will support our staff and students throughout, but please contact us if you need this information in any other language or format or if you have any questions. You can call the office on 0114 2353855 or email enquiries@ecgbert.sheffield.sch.uk

Thank you for your support.