

To parents and guardians of all secondary aged students in schools across Unity Schools Partnership

21 December 2020

Dear Parent or guardian,

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

School leaders are working to keep your child's 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 other protective measures being taken and that you will have seen in schools last term, these tests will help staff and students to remain in school safely. Up to a third of people who have coronavirus experience no symptoms. By testing we will help to stop the virus spread and help to keep your child's school open as safely as possible. The test is voluntary, but we encourage everyone to take it.

We are being asked to test all staff and secondary age students who want to participate from week commencing 4 January 2021. (For parents of children at Westley and Horringer Court middle schools – this letter applies to children in years 7 and 8.) We await more information about when the tests will be available and also have work to do to prepare the staff who will be organising the testing. We are organising the staffing needed and have quickly had offers of help from staff at local primary schools, staff in your school who can be released from other duties or work additional hours and volunteers from those with the necessary safeguarding checks such as school governors and existing volunteers. Your headteacher will write to you further on 4 January.

If you are happy for your child to be tested, please complete the information on the link <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/QKR9F8D> which includes a consent statement (one per student), or if you can print out page 3 of this letter, complete the form and ask your child to take it with them when attending school for their first test. Consent can be withdrawn at any time.

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

Results (which take around half an hour from testing) will be shared directly with staff and pupils participating. Where participants are under 16, parents or legal guardians will also be informed if the test is positive.

We have had assurance from the Department for Education 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.

Testing is 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). We expect each school to be provided with 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, you should choose to visit a drive-through test site if possible, as it is faster than requesting a home test.

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

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

What happens if the test is negative?

They will be able to stay in school and resume their activities as normal. (During the first week of term, many secondary school students will be working from home, and just come into school for a test. Students at special schools will all be at school from the beginning of term.) A pupil 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 pupils 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?

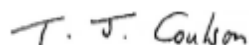
A close contact of someone in school who has tested positive for COVID-19 will be able to return to school if they agree to be tested once a day for 7 days and the test is negative. If they do not want to take the test, they will need to self-isolate as per the national guidelines. This does not apply to household members or close contacts outside of the school who will still need to self-isolate if they have been a close contact of someone who has tested positive. Further details will be provided at the time, but if a student would prefer to self-isolate instead of doing daily testing, they 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 or visiting <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>.

School staff will support staff and pupils throughout if you have any questions. You can contact the office via email covidtestenquiries@unitysp.co.uk Schools are currently closed so you will not receive replies to queries to schools until the start of the new term

Yours faithfully,



Tim Coulson

Chief Executive, Unity Schools Partnership

(on behalf of headteachers at Churchill Free School, The Bridge School, Sir Bobby Robson School, Westley Middle School, Horringer Court Middle School, Castle Manor Academy, County Upper School, Felixstowe School, Newmarket Academy, Samuel Ward Academy, St Edward's Academy, Sybil Andrews Academy, Thomas Gainsborough School.)

Registration

To process the test, we will register all participating students. To complete this registration please complete the link - <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/QKR9F8D> - or print and fill in the form below and complete the enclosed consent statement.

Which School does your child attend?	
Child's Full Name	
Year Group	
Today's date	

NHS Test and Trace consent form for COVID-19 testing

• **For pupils and students younger than 16 years** - this form must be completed by the parent or legal guardian. Please complete one consent form for each child you wish to enrol.

• **Pupils and students over 16** can complete this form themselves, having discussed participation with their parent / guardian if under 18.

1. I have had the opportunity to consider the information provided by the school about the testing, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily, based on the information presented in the letter dated 21 December 2020

2. In the case of under 16s, I have discussed the testing with my child and my child is happy to participate. If on the day of testing they do not wish to take part, then they will not be made to do so and consent can be withdrawn at any time ahead of the test.

3. If over 16, I confirm that I have discussed this with my parents / guardians

4. I consent to having / my child having a nose and throat swab for a lateral flow test.

5. I consent that my / my child's sample(s) will be tested for the presence of COVID-19.

6. I understand that if my child / my result(s) are negative on the lateral flow test I will not be contacted by the school/college except where they/you are a close contact of a confirmed positive.

7. If the lateral flow test indicates the presence of COVID-19, I consent to my child having / having a nose and throat swab for confirmatory PCR testing, which shall be sent the same day to an NHS Test & Trace laboratory.

8. I consent that I / they will need to self-isolate following a positive lateral flow test result, until the results of the confirmatory PCR have been received.

9. I agree that if my / my child's test results are confirmed to be positive from this PCR test, I will report this to the school and I understand that I / my child will be required to self-isolate following public health advice.

10. I consent that if a close contact of my child tests positive but I / my child has tested negative, I / they will continue to attend school but will be tested every day at school / college for 7 days.

Name of parent or guardian if under 16 (print)	
Signature	
Date	
Relationship to child if under 16	