



From Headteacher to Staff Members

21st January 2021

NHS Test and Trace: COVID-19 Testing for Staff

Dear Team.

The Department for Education has recently announced that it will start a programme of asymptomatic Covid-19 testing in primary schools, school-based nurseries and maintained nursery schools.

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 work in as safe an environment as possible. Up to one in three people who have Covid-19 have the virus without symptoms so could be transmitting the virus unknowingly. Tackling the pandemic requires identifying asymptomatic, infectious individuals. By testing, we will help to reduce the spread in schools. I am therefore strongly encouraging all staff to take the tests.

Lateral Flow Device (LFD) tests have been widely and successfully used to detect COVID-19 in asymptomatic individuals. No test is perfect, but the speed and convenience of LFD tests supports detection of the virus in asymptomatic individuals who would not otherwise be tested. They are clinically approved and are crucial in the fight against the virus. As the tests are more sensitive with higher viral loads, there is a risk of returning a negative result when viral loads are low (e.g. in the early stages of infection). This is why Public Health England recommend two LFD tests 3 to 4 days apart, or regular testing, to enhance detection by picking up any cases which were not detected during the first test and to catch any new infections.

If you test positive using a LFD, it is likely that you are infectious at that moment, whereas people testing positive on a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) or lab-processed test could be in the less infectious early or late stages of disease. This means that by using the lateral flow test we can identify people with a high viral load who are the most likely to spread the virus further. A negative LFD result should not be read as a means to relax or ignore social distancing or other virus prevention measures intended to reduce transmission – LFD is an additional tool that contributes to reducing risk.

Initial return to testing

You will be able to take the tests every week from 25th January 2021. Staff attending school will be conducting these tests at home, twice a week and can collect tests from the school office from **25th January 2021**.

How the tests work

You will be able to collect from school LFD test kits which enable self-testing from home. You will conduct the test, before coming into work, twice a week. The LFDs supplied do not require laboratory processing and can provide a quick result in around 30 minutes. Comprehensive guidance

on self-testing is contained in the 'Instructions for Use' leaflet which comes with the test kit. There is also a useful video to show you how to administer the test. All support documents and video can be found by clicking [HERE](#).

Once the test has been conducted you will log the test result [online](#) and need to also, separately, inform school of the test result. You will also receive a notification of a positive or negative result from NHS Test & Trace. You will need to inform the school by entering your details [HERE](#). If you test positive please ring me as soon as possible (07587 086352). Tests are free of charge and will be provided by the school.

Consent / Privacy

Once you understand the testing process and have read the privacy notice, if you choose to participate, you are committing to self-administer the test and providing your results. School will ensure that staff provide their results (positive, negative or void) to NHS Test and Trace via the self-report gov.uk page. Results should also be shared with school / nursery to support local contact tracing.

To opt in and agree to the privacy notice, please click [HERE](#).

If you decline to participate you can still attend school if not symptomatic.

People who decline to participate in this testing programme should follow the usual national guidelines on self-isolation and anyone should [get tested](#) if they show symptoms.

If you have any questions, please do ask.

Thank you for your support

Paul Hayward

Headteacher