

2nd January 2021

Dear parent or guardian,

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

We are working to keep our school as safe as possible. You may have heard that testing for those without Covid-19 symptoms is beginning across the country using new, quicker Covid-19 tests known as 'lateral flow tests'.

We need you to give permission for your child to be tested.

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 Covid-19 experience no symptoms. By testing we will help to stop the virus spread and help to keep our school open as safely as possible. The test is voluntary, but I would encourage families to give permission for their children to be tested.

We will be arranging testing for all staff and students with permissions from week commencing 4 January 2021. Testing is free of charge.

I enclose an instructional leaflet with some more information [here](#).

Give permission for your child to be tested

If you are happy for your child to be tested, please fill in the consent form [here](#). 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.

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 lab-based 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.

I know that many of you will have further questions about how this works. We have put together an FAQs document that you can [access on our website](#) here.

Volunteer to help with testing

We are aiming to test our entire school community twice before they return to in-person learning, whilst still providing full-time education. We are seeking parent volunteers to help us with the testing process. If you can spare some time to help between Monday 4th and Friday 15th January then please email office@gyca.org.uk to volunteer. You would not be asked to administer tests on students, just to support with the broader testing process.

I hope that your child will be able to participate in the testing programme, and help us make school as safe as possible for the New Year.

Yours sincerely,



Mr K Blakey
Principal

FAQs

What if a pupil tests positive?

Participating staff and pupils 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.

Pupils 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 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) they will need to self-isolate.

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?

They will be able to stay in school and resume their activities as normal. A pupil 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 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?

Your child will be able to continue attending school if they agree to be tested once a day for seven 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](#). 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 or visiting <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>.

How are the tests being run?

We will set up a dedicated area of the school for conducting Covid-19 tests. The tests will be administered by the students themselves, unless they have a disability that prevents them from doing so. The testing process will be run by a mixture of school staff, specialist agency staff, and in some cases volunteers. All testing areas are managed and overseen by thoroughly vetted staff with DBS checks.