

12th January 2021

NHS Test and Trace: COVID-19 testing for Staff and Pupils

Dear Parent or Guardian,

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 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 be looking to test all staff and secondary school and college age pupils as they return after the Christmas break, with priority given to exam year groups and those undertaking external vocational and technical qualifications in January.

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. Results (which take around half an hour from testing) will be shared directly with the individual participant. The school will inform the pupil of a positive test result. Where participants are under 16, parents or legal guardians will also be informed. The pupil will also receive a text/email notification of a positive or negative result from the online NHS system. Tests are free of charge and I enclose a leaflet with further information.

What if my child tests positive?

If a pupil tests positive on a lateral flow device, they will be informed immediately by school and will need to take a further 'PCR test' to confirm the result. This should be on the same day or as soon as possible afterwards. School will be able to provide these PCR test kits to perform at home.

During the time while waiting for the PCR result via text/email they will need to self-isolate.

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

What happens if the test is negative?

While a small number of pupils may need to repeat the test if the first test was invalid or void for some reason, pupils who test negative will be able to stay in school and resume their activities as normal. Pupils will be informed of negative test results via text/email. Where participants are under 16, parents or legal guardians will also be informed.

What if staff or students have been in close contact with someone in school who tests positive?

The staff member or student will be notified that they are a close contact by the school. If close contacts agree to be tested each 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 Test and Trace. In this instance they should notify NHS Test and Trace that they are a close contact through school and are participating in daily contact testing.

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 (including 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>.

We will support our staff and pupils throughout, but please contact us if you have any questions. You can contact the office by email on office@ipsleyacademy.co.uk.

Yours faithfully,

Miss Saul