

Thursday 25th February 2021

NHS Test and Trace: COVID-19 Lateral Flow Testing - STAFF

Dear Colleague,

Following the announcement that there will be a wider reopening of schools and colleges from 8th March, the government has confirmed its plans for regular testing for those without coronavirus symptoms. I write to you to provide more information about the testing programme that will be in place for our school.

We will be looking to test all staff and secondary age pupils as they return following this latest period of lockdown using Lateral Flow Device (LFD) tests. Along with the other protective measures we are taking, testing will allow us to help you and other staff members to work in as safe an environment as possible. Up to one third of people who have coronavirus are asymptomatic. By testing regularly 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.

Testing using lateral flow device (LFD) tests

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 (for example, in the early stages of infection). This is why Public Health England recommends two LFD tests 3 to 5 days apart (or 3 to 4 days for home 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 an 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.

Testing of staff

All staff will now be able to conduct their tests at home and will be asked to continue testing every week.

You will be able to collect LFD test kits from school, which enables self-testing at home. Each test kit contains 7 tests. You should 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 on [YouTube](#).



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You will need to report your result to NHS Test and Trace as soon as the test is completed either [online](#) or by telephone as per the instructions in the home test kit. Tests are free of charge and will be provided by the school. It is important that tests assigned to you are not used by anyone else.

Tests will be available for you to collect from the main admin office from today (Thursday 25th February).

Testing of pupils

We will expect to test all secondary age pupils on their return. Pupils will be asked to test three times in the first two weeks of their return to school (though there is some flexibility in this timescale), three to five days apart. After this all pupils will receive home test kits and will be asked to test themselves twice a week from home and to log and report their results in the same way as staff.

We will continue to run a small testing site at school so that those pupils who are unable or do not wish to test themselves at home are able to be tested regularly.

Consent / Privacy

Once you have understood the testing process and have read the privacy notice, if you choose to participate, you are committing to self-administer the test and report your results (whether positive, negative or void) via the NHS Test & Trace digital platform and to school.

Testing is voluntary. Staff who decline to participate can still attend school if not symptomatic. If they begin to show symptoms, they should [get tested](#) and follow the usual national guidelines on self-isolation.

We will support our staff and pupils throughout, but please contact us if you have any questions.

Yours sincerely,



Colin D Scott - Headteacher

Useful Links:

- Risedale Consent Form: [NHS Test & Trace Consent Form for COVID-19 Testing](#)
- Self-swab instruction leaflet: [How to do your test COVID-19 instruction leaflet for schools](#)
- Considerations for children with SEND: [Mass asymptomatic testing in specialist settings - GOV.UK](#)
- Getting a COVID-19 PCR test: www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test

Privacy Notice:

- [COVID-19 Testing of Staff Privacy Notice](#)

