



Together Students Achieve

Principal: Mr Paul Willerton

7 January 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

Prior to the lockdown announced on Monday 4 January, we had been working on implementing a testing system onsite for all students using new/quicker Covid-19 tests known as 'lateral flow tests'.

Along with the other protective measures that we are taking, these tests will help staff and students to remain in the academy safely. Up to one third of people who have coronavirus experience have no symptoms, and so by testing we will help to stop the spread of the virus and help to keep the academy open as safely as possible.

We aim to test all students who are continuing to access the onsite Critical Worker and 'vulnerable' student provision to ensure that everyone who attends is safe. The test is voluntary but I would encourage everyone to take it. Initially it would involve two tests, 3 to 5 days apart. After this point the tests will only then be used so students can stay in the academy should they have been in close contact with a positive case on site.

The first test will take place on Friday 8 January and the second on Monday 11 January. If you are happy for your child to be tested, please can you fill in the online consent form (one per student) using the survey link [here](#). This will enable us to plan the logistics around the number of tests needed to be conducted.

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. Students will self-administer the test with guidance from staff.

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

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 will be offered free of charge.

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What if a student 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). The academy 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 yourself, 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 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 the academy and resume their activities as normal. A student will only be told if they test positive on a 'lateral flow test', so if they do not hear anything from us they should assume that the test was negative. A small number of students may need to repeat the test if the first test was invalid or void for any reason.

What if a close contact at school/college tests positive?

A close contact of someone in school/college who has tested positive for Covid-19 will be able to return to the academy 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 academy who will still need to self-isolate. 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 the academy 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 by visiting <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any queries.

Yours faithfully

Mr P Willerton
Principal

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