

From Principal to Staff Members

22nd January 2021

NHS Test and Trace: COVID-19 Testing for Staff

Dear Staff Member,

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.

Saint Nicholas Owen Catholic Multi Academy Company

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Initial return to testing

Staff will be able to take the tests every week from 25 January 2021. Staff attending school or nursery will be conducting these tests at home, twice a week and can collect tests from St Ambrose Catholic Primary School, in the week of 25th January 2021.

How the tests work

Staff will be able to collect from school LFD test kits which enable self-testing from home. Staff 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 <http://www.gov.uk/covid19-self-test-help>

Once the test has been conducted you will log the test result online at <https://www.gov.uk/report-covid19-result> and need to also, separately, inform school of the test result. Tests are free of charge and will be provided by the school.

Consent / Privacy

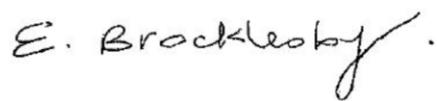
Once staff understand the testing process and read a privacy notice, if they choose to participate, they are committing to self-administer the test and provide their results. Schools should ensure that staff provide their results (positive, negative or void) to NHS Test and Trace via the self-report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

Staff who decline to participate 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.

We will support our staff throughout but let us know if you have any questions.

Yours faithfully,



Mrs E Brocklesby