

January 2021

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 pupils who are in school in the coming days and weeks.

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. Whilst the lateral flow testing for staff and students will take place, the seven day serial testing for close contacts will be postponed whilst regulatory approval is sought.

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.

Please be aware that whilst we will have trained members of staff in the test venue, we are asking that pupils administer the test themselves and that assistance in conducting the test will not be given. If there are any instances where pupils cannot conduct the test themselves, we can make arrangements, at a mutually convenient and safe time, for parents to come in to support their child with the test.

What if my child tests positive?

If a pupil tests positive on a lateral flow device, they will be informed immediately 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. The school will contact you to make arrangements for your child to go home. PCR tests can be obtained from an NHS testing centre.

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 the seven day serial testing is approved and 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 school by emailing enquiry@jws.bham.sch.uk.

The tests are completely voluntary, free of charge and will require parental consent for students. We hope as many students as possible will take the test to minimise the risk of infections spreading in school in January and that you will support us in this effort for everyone's safety.

We will, in addition to your consent, also ask the student again immediately prior to the test and no test will be performed on a student who does not at that stage give consent. Giving consent is also indicating that you are happy for your child to conduct the test themselves.

Can you please ensure that you complete the consent form attached indicating whether you consent or not to your child taking part in the lateral flow test scheme.

Yours faithfully

Mrs T Peters
Headteacher

Enclosure: further leaflet and consent form

Lateral Flow Test Consent Form

NHS Test and Trace consent statements for COVID-19 testing

Please read the statements below and sign the bottom of this form advising whether **you do/do not give consent for testing**.

1. I have had the opportunity to consider the information provided by the school.
2. In the case of under 16s, I have discussed the testing with my child and my child is happy to participate. If on the day of testing they do not wish to take part, then they will not be made to do so and consent can be withdrawn at any time ahead of the test.
3. I consent to my child having a nose and throat swab for a lateral flow test. **I understand that the child will conduct the test themselves.**
4. I consent that my child's sample(s) will be tested for the presence of COVID-19.
5. I understand that if my child's result(s) are negative on the lateral flow test I will not be contacted by the school/college except where they/you are a close contact of a confirmed positive.
6. If the lateral flow test indicates the presence of COVID-19, I agree to make arrangements for my child to leave the school site and to obtain a PCR test from an NHS testing centre.
7. I consent that they will need to self-isolate following a positive lateral flow test result, until the results of the confirmatory PCR have been received.
8. I agree that if my child's test results are confirmed to be positive from this PCR test, I will report this to the school and I understand that my child will be required to self-isolate following public health advice.
9. I consent that if a close contact of my child tests positive, but my child has tested negative, they will continue to attend school / college but will be tested every day at school for 7 days.

Please tick which of the following two statements is applicable:

I agree with the following statements and hereby give my consent for my child to participate in the Covid Testing scheme

or

I do not wish my child to participate in the Covid Testing scheme.

Please confirm below that the current email address/mobile phone number we hold for you in our school data system is the way you wish to the NHS to send your child's test result to.

YES

NO

Student Name: _____ Year Group: _____

Signed: _____ Date: _____
Parent/Carer

Print Name: _____ Date: _____
Parent/Carer