

31<sup>st</sup> December 2020

## **NHS Test and Trace: COVID-19 testing for staff and students**

Dear Parent/Carer

As parents will be aware, we are working with the support of Governors and Truro and Penwith Academy Trust to keep our school community as safe as possible. Parents 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 tests'.

Along with the other protective measures we are taking, these tests will help our staff and students to remain in school safely. Government advice is that up to one third of people who have coronavirus experience no symptoms. By testing staff and students we will help to stop the virus spread and help to keep our school open as safely as possible. The test is voluntary, but our school's approach is to encourage everyone to take it.

We will be testing all staff and students, where parents have given consent, from the week beginning 4 January 2021. A leaflet with some more information is attached. Confirmation of your child's date and test time will be provided as soon as possible, once you have registered your consent. We intend to test all staff on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> January, Year 11 will then be prioritised to ensure their tests have been completed before they return to school from Monday January 11<sup>th</sup>. Students in other year groups will be tested in the days and weeks that follow and all students will return to school from Monday January 18<sup>th</sup>. You will be contacted to confirm arrangements for your child's test.

To give consent for your child to be tested, please fill in the online consent form using the hyperlink below.

<https://forms.gle/4AgtKg6w12mgP6Yv6>

Children taking the test will be supervised by our trained staff. The 'lateral flow' tests are quick and easy using a swab of your nose and throat. The vast majority of our students will find the tests easy to self-administer. Once the test has been completed, Year 11 students can return to class. Students in other year groups will return home and test results will be confirmed later that day.

If your child's test is negative they will be able to attend classes as usual when their year group returns to school. If your child receives a positive test then a further test will need to be arranged as soon as possible via NHS 111. More information is provided in the attached information.

The Government advice is that these tests work - 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 is offered free of charge. By testing as many students as possible before they return to school we can minimise transmission of the virus within our community. The support of our parents is very much appreciated at this time.

## **What if a pupil tests positive?**

Participating staff and students who test positive will be informed about their results individually and parents will also be notified. Students who are attending onsite provision (Year 11, vulnerable students and those of critical workers) who test positive will be isolated whilst they wait for a parent to collect them. Guidance on safe travel (to return home) and additional precautions will be provided along with the test results.

Students who have tested positive 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). Parents can go to [www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test](https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test) or call 119 to book a follow-up test. If ordering a PCR test yourselves, parents should visit a drive-through test site if possible, as it is faster than requesting a home test.

While waiting for the PCR result (via text / email) students will need to self-isolate and will not be able to attend school. Students should use our remote provision for this period of time.

If the PCR test returns a positive result then students and the household will have to self-isolate and follow the guidance from NHS Test and Trace. It is very important that parents keep the school informed about their child's test results.

## **What happens if the test is negative?**

Students will be able to stay in school and join their classes as normal. A student will only be told if they test positive on a 'lateral flow' test, so if you do not hear from us within 24 hours you can assume the test was negative. A small number of students may need to repeat the test if the first test was invalid or void for some reason.

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

A close contact of someone in school who has tested positive for COVID-19 will be able to return to school immediately providing they are tested once a day for 7 days and the test is negative. If they do not want to have daily testing, they will need to self-isolate as per the national guidelines. This does not apply to household members or close contacts outside of school who will still need to self-isolate. Further details will be provided at the time, but if students would prefer to self-isolate instead of doing daily testing, you can.

## **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 (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 continue to support our staff and students throughout coming weeks and will keep our parents updated with regards to the Government's testing programme. Parents with questions can contact [enquiries@st-ives.cornwall.sch.uk](mailto:enquiries@st-ives.cornwall.sch.uk) or their child's Year Leader for advice and support.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank parents for their continued partnership.

Yours faithfully

Mrs Jan Woodhouse, Executive Headteacher