

04 January 2021

Dear Parents/ Carers

As our Spring Term begins tomorrow, I hope your child is ready to begin their remote learning and is confident about using our online provision. Further guidance on this is being sent out by Mrs Lock, Deputy Headteacher, during the course of today. We have now received our first delivery of test kits and plans are well underway for our Covid testing programme, ahead of students' return to school. We are now training staff to ensure that we can follow the NHS procedures and working through the other required arrangements.

The tests will identify anyone within our school community with Covid 19 who does not have symptoms. Scientists have evidence that about one third of cases are like this: people without symptoms who are infectious to others. Testing as many staff and students as possible is therefore going to help us to minimise the risk of infection in school, and to avoid further disruption to students' education from staff absence, or because students need to self-isolate. Other Covid safety measures including frequent and thorough hand washing/ sanitising, face masks in communal areas and corridors and social distancing wherever possible along with good ventilation (students will need an extra layer because classroom windows will be open when they return to school) continue to be essential and will be rigorously followed in school.

Here is a summary of the testing procedure we will be using:

1. All students will be offered two tests. The second test will be done 3-5 days after the first one. The test is a simple swab of the nose and throat: probably not pleasant, but quite simple and quick to do.
2. The tests will be self-administered. Students who are unable to test themselves will not be able to be tested. Our staff do not have the required level of training to be able to assist children to take the tests.
3. Only children who have parental consent will be tested. If you have not already done so, please provide your consent by completing the consent form linked below as soon as possible. We currently have around 70% of consent forms returned: a great first response. Thank you for your support.

<https://forms.gle/4AqtKg6w12mgP6Yv6>

4. We will prioritise testing this week for students using on site provision (vulnerable students and the children of keyworkers) and Year 11. Vulnerable children and those of keyworkers will be tested on Wednesday 6th January during the school day. Year 11 students will be tested on Thursday 7th and Friday 8th January. Once students have had their first test, their second will be done next week during the school day. All Year 11 students will be able to return to school on Monday 11th January, provided national guidance does not change.
5. Parents will be sent a 10 minute appointment slot for their child. Please ensure your child arrives on time for their test. This is essential for us to be able to complete the number of tests we need to, and to ensure that our testing runs to schedule. Students who are late and miss their test slot may not be able to be tested and may have to wait for a considerable amount of time for the next available slot. We expect each test will take around 10 minutes to complete and your child will leave school once this initial test is completed.

6. Results will be available within a short period of time: probably a few hours and possibly more quickly than this. Parents will only be informed if their child tests positive. If you do not hear anything you can assume your child was negative.
7. If your child tests positive, parents will need to contact NHS 119 to arrange a follow up test through a testing centre. Students will need to self-isolate while this test is being arranged and whilst waiting for results. A further positive test will mean that close contacts are also required to self-isolate and the student will not be able to attend school for 10 days. Please keep the school fully updated about any positive test results.
8. In the week beginning Monday 11th January, we will prioritise testing of students in Year 7 and 10. We will also be carrying out the second test on Year 11. Once we are confident about our timings, we will confirm your child's test date and time. We expect to be able to inform parents about their child's test date and time for Years 7, 8, 9 and 10 by Friday 8th January.

The guidance attached explains what the test involves in more detail. Please share this with your child so they know what to expect and are confident about the test procedure before they come into school for their test. With regret, we do not have the facilities or capacity for parents to accompany their child for the test. If your child cannot self-administer the test, then we will be unable to test them in school.

I hope this is a helpful summary of the testing procedure and programme. Year 11 parents will be contacted by the end of Tuesday 5th January to confirm their child's test date and time. I will contact parents with children in other year groups later this week to confirm the timetable of testing for the week beginning Monday 11th January.

Thank you to all our families for their continued support. With your help, we will be able to confidently bring children back into school and minimise any risks in our community. As always, the safety of our students and school community is a priority and our staff team are very grateful for our ongoing partnership with parents. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours faithfully

Simon Horner
Head of School

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