

31 December 2020

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

Dear Parent(s)/Carer(s):

We are continuing to work to keep our school as safe as possible. 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 tests'.

Along with the other protective measures that we are taking, these tests are to be used to help staff and students to remain in school safely. Up to one third of people who have coronavirus experience no symptoms. The testing programme aims to help us to control the spread of the virus and help to keep our school open as safely as possible. The test is voluntary, but the government encourages everyone to take it.

We will be testing all staff and secondary school age students who want to participate from the end of the first week in January 2021. An instructional leaflet is attached with some more information.

If you are happy for your son/daughter to be tested, please fill in the electronic form and consent statement accessed through the link that will be sent to you early next week via MyEd App (one per student) and return it to the school by clicking submit on the booking form.

Those taking the test will be supervised by trained staff. The 'lateral flow' tests are quick and easy, using a swab from the nose and throat. For under 18s, staff will oversee the swab process. Results (which take around half an hour to show - from testing) will be shared directly with the staff and student participating. Where participants are under 16, parents or carers will also be informed, where the test result is positive.

In validation studies conducted by Oxford University and Public Health England, Lateral Flow tests 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 a higher viral load, hence the need to test frequently. The tests will be done at no cost to the participants.

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

Participating staff and students who test positive will be informed about their results individually. Where participants are under 16, parents or carers will also be notified. Guidance on safe travel and additional precautions will be provided along with test results.

Where participants get a positive result, they 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. Subject to availability, the school will be able to provide these PCR test kits to perform at home, or else parents/carers will be asked to visit [www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test](http://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test) or call 119 to book a follow-up test. When booking/ordering a PCR test, it is better to choose to visit a drive-through test site, where possible, as this process is generally faster than requesting a home test.

During the time while someone is waiting for a PCR result (via text or email), they will need to self-isolate. If the PCR test returns a positive result, they will have to self-isolate and follow the guidance from NHS Test and Trace.

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

Students and staff testing negative will be able to stay in school 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 otherwise, they can assume it was a negative result. A small number of participants may need to repeat the test, as the first test will sometimes be invalid, or void.

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

A 'close contact' of someone in school, who has tested positive for COVID-19, will be able to attend school if they agree to be tested once a day for seven days, and if the test result, on each occasion, 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 school, who will still need to self-isolate.

### **What if my child develops symptoms?**

This school-based testing programme is for people with no symptoms. If your son/daughter 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 a test must be booked by calling 119 or visiting <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>.

Please contact us if you need this information in any other language or format, or if you have any questions. You can call the office on 01543 682286 or email [office@chaseterraceacademy.co.uk](mailto:office@chaseterraceacademy.co.uk).

At present the amount of information about how this programme will continue to operate beyond the first couple of weeks is very limited. Furthermore, the nature and incidence of the pandemic, at both a national and local scale, is changing all the time. We will do our very best to keep you well informed of the implications for school and how we can best work together, within the constraints of the circumstances.

Sincerely:

**Stuart Jones**  
**Executive Headteacher**

**Nicola Mason**  
**Head of School**