

Update on twice weekly COVID-19 testing at home for students

Dear Parent/Carer

Following a successful testing programme in college where students were offered three supervised tests on site, the process is now moving to twice weekly, rapid COVID-19 testing at home for all students.

Up to 1 in 3 people who have COVID-19 have no symptoms and could be spreading it without knowing. Getting into a regular habit of testing twice a week will help stop the virus spreading, keeping your family and friends safer.

Symptoms of COVID-19

The most common symptoms are:

- the recent onset of a new continuous cough
- a high temperature
- a loss of, or change in, your normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia)

We are sending home COVID-19 testing kits with your child this week. Tests are free of charge and come in packs of 3 or 7 tests in a box with a leaflet on how to take the test and report the results. Please make sure your child tests themselves **twice a week 3-5 days apart, in the morning before college if possible and, if not, the evening before.**

Your child should also **continue testing twice a week, at home, throughout the Easter school holidays.** We have sent home sufficient kits to facilitate this.

Taking part

Taking part in testing is voluntary and all students will be able to attend college whether they take part in testing or not, however we are strongly encouraging students and their families to participate in the national testing programme.

This does not replace testing for those with symptoms. If you have symptoms you must self-isolate immediately, book a PCR test and follow national guidelines.

Reporting results

It is really important that results of test are reported online straight away, even if your child's result is negative or void. It is easy to do at www.gov.uk/report-covid19-result.

Results can also be reported via telephone by calling 119 (free from mobiles and landlines). Lines are open every day, 7am to 11pm.

It is important to keep a note of your child's results and **notify college if the result is positive.**

We continue to expect the following from students:

- If you or someone in your household has Coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, or if anyone in your household has tested positive in at least the last 10 days, DO NOT attend college. Stay at home, inform the college, and contact NHS 111 for advice and guidance.
- If you develop symptoms, you should get a free COVID-19 test, phone NHS 119. Once you have had the test it is vital that you inform the college of your results.

- You should observe all the arrangements and procedures in college designed to ensure your safety, and to minimise the risk of transmitting the virus.
- It is mandatory to wear masks or face coverings when travelling to college by public transport. Face coverings or masks must be worn when moving around college and in lessons, such as in corridors and other communal areas. However, students will not be required to do this if they have health issues that mean they cannot wear a face covering.
- You must practice good levels of hygiene, washing hands frequently, and using the sanitising stations located around college. It is particularly important that you use hand sanitiser or wash your hands when you arrive at college. You should always wash your hands before/after eating and before/after using the toilet.
- You should also follow the “catch it, bin it, kill it” advice promoted by the government.
- You must adhere to social distancing when using the public areas or whilst moving around college.
- Where possible cycle or walk to college.
- Local students should study independently at home rather than staying in college when they do not have lessons.
- To follow procedures if you are asked to self-isolate because of a positive case at College.

Testing for parents, households, and bubbles twice a week

A reminder that regular rapid testing is now also available for parents, their households and support or childcare bubbles. The government is encouraging all families to participate in twice weekly testing to help stop the spread.

Parents and other adults in the household can access tests by:

- Ordering tests online www.gov.uk/order-school-household-tests
- Getting an assisted test at work if it is available
- Attending a test site to get tested (where you will be able to see how to take the test) or pick up tests to do at home.

To find out more on household testing visit [Households and bubbles of pupils, students and staff of schools and colleges: get rapid lateral flow tests - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/households-and-bubbles-of-pupils-students-and-staff-of-schools-and-colleges-get-rapid-lateral-flow-tests)

We continue to encourage everyone to take part in regular COVID-19 testing.

Yours sincerely



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