



DARRICK WOOD SCHOOL

RESPECT | RESPONSIBILITY | HONESTY

11th January 2021

NHS Test and Trace: COVID-19 testing for Staff and Students

Dear Parent/Carer

Testing for those without coronavirus symptoms is beginning across the country using new, quicker COVID-19 tests known as 'lateral flow devices'. This email provides information about the testing programme at Darrick Wood School.

Up to one third of people who have coronavirus are asymptomatic – they show no symptoms but can spread the virus. By testing we will help to reduce the spread in school through asymptomatic transmission. I am therefore strongly encouraging all our students and staff to consent to be tested. There has been much publicity about these tests including their accuracy. In short, our training has indicated that tests that are administered correctly are far more likely to be accurate and so we are going to great lengths to set up our test centre well. It should also be noted that even if we pick up just a small number of asymptomatic carriers of the virus in school, we will make the School and its community safer than without any testing on site. I urge you to consent to the tests. They are free and we are working hard to ensure this programme is successful. I attach a leaflet with further information. Consent is needed before we can test a student or member of staff. You can complete the consent form [here](#). Our Privacy Notice in relation to this can be found [here](#).

The tests are self-administered like the ones some of you will have experienced if you have had to be tested before. The difference is that a trained member of staff processes the swab and records the result at school within 30 minutes using a 'lateral flow device'. The swab does not have to be sent off to a laboratory for testing. See below for details.

We will have staff on hand in our test centre to ensure all our students and staff are reassured and supported through the entire process.

Testing for those attending currently

We will be looking to test all staff and students who are currently on site routinely (at least weekly). In addition, any member of staff or student who has come into contact with a positive case on the School site can be tested daily for seven days to allow them to remain in school rather than have to isolate for 10 days and miss school. Students who are 16 or over can give their own consent by completing the form above. Please ask them to do so. If your child is under 16 please complete the form yourself. Tests will begin later this week or early next week.

What about those not attending currently?

Testing is not currently available to the majority of our students who are to remain at home during this period of lockdown. However, I would appreciate it if you could still complete the consent form above as this will help our planning for when the School opens more widely to all students.

The government has said it expects that mass testing like this will be one of the ways of ensuring schools can re-open in the future. Students who are 16 or over can give their own consent by completing the form above. Please ask them to do so. If your child is under 16 please complete the form yourself.

How the tests work

Those taking a test will be supervised by trained staff and volunteers. The lateral flow tests are quick and easy to undertake, using a swab of the throat and nose. The result is available at the test centre at school within 30 minutes of the swab being taken and the School will inform the student and their parent if the student's result is positive and the student needs to isolate. Parents will need to register all tests within 24 hours on the online NHS system. Whether the test is positive or negative, the system will then use text or email to inform the person registering of the result.

What if my child tests positive?

If a student tests positive on a lateral flow device, they will be informed immediately by the School 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 provide these PCR test kits to perform at home.

During the time while waiting for the PCR result, they will need to self-isolate. If the PCR test returns a positive result they will then 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 students may need to repeat the test if the first test was invalid or void for some reason, students who test negative will be able to stay in school and resume their activities as normal. Students/parents will be informed of negative test results via text/email once the test is registered with the NHS online system.

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 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. Students who have not consented to testing will have to isolate for 10 days if they are a contact of a positive case in school. Only those contacts who consent to be tested for 7 days may remain in school.

What if my child develops symptoms?

This testing programme 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 students throughout, but please contact us if you have any questions.

Yours sincerely

Dr M J Airey
Head Teacher