

26/02/2021

Dear Parent/Carer or Colleague,

Mass and serial COVID-19 testing at Bridge Short Stay School

I am writing to provide further details regarding the Government's rollout of COVID-19 testing in school.

Purpose of Testing

It is crucial that action continues to be taken to break the chains of transmission of the virus and safeguard the health of staff and pupils in school.

Where will testing take place?

The testing site at The Bridge Centre will be in a designated room at the rear end of the school, accessed via corridor.

Who will carry out the testing?

The school has appointed a team of colleagues (who are all DBS cleared) to oversee the testing. Students and staff will be required to swab their own nose and throat before it is passed to the testing team for processing. As part of the consent form, parents/carers will receive notification by text and email of their child's result.

How often will testing be offered?

When students return from their period of remote learning in the current lockdown we will try to test as many students as we can as they return. This will be in the form of three tests, taken three to five days apart. Testing will be offered weekly to staff.

Following on from this, approaching the Easter Holidays we will be offering all students twice-weekly home testing kits. These will have clear instructions for use. They will then register positive, negative and void results on a web-based portal, with the results shared with NHS Test and Protect.

What type of test is it?

The testing kits used are the rapid lateral flow self-administering nose and throat swab (LFT's). If a positive result is confirmed, parents/staff will be required to arrange for a laboratory test using the normal arrangements booking online <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>) or phoning 119.

How the Test Works

Those taking the test will be supervised by trained staff and volunteers. The lateral flow tests are quick and easy to undertake, using a swab of the nose and throat. Results take approximately half an hour from testing and are free of charge. No later than 24 hours after the test has been completed, NHS Test and Trace will send you an e-mail and text message (based on the contact details you provide on the consent form) with the test result. The school will only notify parents/carers and students of a positive lateral flow test result.

What happens if my result is positive?

If students do test positive then the school will expect parents to collect them from school as soon as possible. Students will remain isolated until collected. Staff testing positive will need to go home. Both staff and parents should book a laboratory PCR test straight away. The school will need to see the results of this test. If the

laboratory test is negative, students/staff can return to school, if it is positive then the student/member of staff will need to isolate and the school will begin daily testing of any of your close contacts.

What happens if my result is negative?

Students and staff can continue to attend school/work in the normal way. **Testing does not remove the need for everyone to socially distance, keep good hand hygiene, wear face coverings and for good ventilation when inside.**

What if students have been in close contact with someone in school who tests positive?

We will take swift action in the event of a positive test result, or if notified that someone who has attended school has tested positive for coronavirus. We will continue to work closely with the dedicated advice service introduced by Public Health England (PHE) and delivered by the NHS Business Services Authority. They work with us and guide us through the actions we need to take. Based on their advice, we will send home those people who have been in close contact with the person who has tested positive, advising them to self-isolate immediately and for the next 10 full days counting from the day after contact with the individual who tested positive.

Do I have to take part?

We must have parental consent for children **under 16** to take part and individual consent for anyone over 16. Explicit consent is required. This means we must have the consent form signed before we can test your child or you, if you are a member of staff. **The Bridge Centre is in no way applying pressure to take part**, however, we strongly encourage all students who are receiving face to face education to be tested. We ask that all parents/carers discuss the testing process with students so they are aware and well informed of what they will be required to do. We will be unable to test any student that arrives at the test centre and informs us that they do not want to be tested. Regardless if parents/carers have given consent, the test will not be completed.

Please complete the consent form as soon as possible if you wish your child to be tested and return this form in the prepaid envelope enclosed. All boxes must be completed in full and with accurate information as failure to do so will result in the test not taking place and the test result not being received via text or e-mail. Please complete one form for each of your children at the school. We will seek to contact parents/staff that have not completed a form, so we know their intentions either way.

What if I have questions?

The NHS and Government website provide plenty of information about COVID-19 and the testing requirements, if you have a specific question about how the testing will take place at The Bridge Centre please contact the testing lead Mr James Morris.

The consent form is for participation in tests designed to detect asymptomatic coronavirus cases. Anyone experiencing symptoms should follow **government guidelines to self-isolate**, even if they have had a recent negative lateral flow test.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely



James Morris
Headteacher

