



24 February 2021

NHS Test and Trace: COVID-19 Testing at Plymstock School

Dear Parent or Guardian,

You may have heard that testing for those without coronavirus symptoms is beginning across the country using new, quicker COVID19 tests known as 'lateral flow devices'. This letter is to help give you more information about the testing programme in our school.

Along with the other protective measures we are taking, testing will allow us to take further measures to help students and staff to remain in school. Up to one third of people who have coronavirus are asymptomatic. By testing we will help to reduce the spread in school and college settings through asymptomatic transmission. I am therefore strongly encouraging all members of our school to be tested.

Initial testing

We will be looking to test all staff and secondary school age students as they return to school. Information published on 22 February indicates that students will be offered 3 Lateral Flow device tests on their return to school; after that tests will be carried out at home.

How the tests work

Those taking the test will be supervised by trained staff and volunteers. The lateral flow device tests are quick and easy to undertake, using a swab of the nose and throat. Results (which take around half an hour from testing) will be shared directly with the individual participant. The school will inform the participant of a positive test result. Where participants are under 16, parents or legal guardians will also be informed. The participant will also receive a notification of a positive or negative result from the online NHS system.

Nationally we do not have a perfect test for infectiousness, however the Lateral Flow Device (LFD) is a quick test which can identify an individual who is positive with a high level of the virus. Using this test to identify those who have a high level of the virus is a step forward to reducing infections. Please be aware that a negative result on this test means that an individual may have a low level or no presence of the virus. So, we all need to continue behaving as if we and others have the virus, even if the LFD test returns a negative result.

Tests are free of charge and I enclose a leaflet with further information together with the privacy statement.

What if my child tests positive?

If a student tests positive on a lateral flow device, they will need to self-isolate for 10 days and follow the guidance from NHS Test and Trace.

What happens if the test is negative?

Please remember that this means that an individual may have a low level or no presence of the virus. Students who test negative will be able to stay in school and resume their activities as normal. Students will be informed of negative test results via text/email from NHS Test and Trace. Where students are under 16, parents or legal guardians will also be informed. A small number of students may need to repeat the test if the first test was invalid or void for some reason.



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

The student will be notified that they are a close contact by the school and will need to self-isolate for 10 days in line with Government guidance.

What if my child develops symptoms?

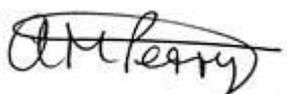
This testing programme at school is for people with no symptoms. If anyone develops symptoms at any time (such as a high temperature; a new, continuous cough; or a loss or change to their sense of smell or taste) they must immediately self-isolate, and book a test by calling 119 or visiting <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>.

If you are happy for your child to be tested, please complete the consent form by following the link attached to the email. If you have more than one child at Plymstock School, please be aware that we require a consent form for each child. The test will not be scheduled until we have received your consent. Students who are currently attending our Sixth Form and are over the age of 16 can complete this form themselves, having discussed participation with their parent / guardian if under the age of 18. A copy of this letter and the link to the consent form will be sent to our Sixth Form students directly.

It is not a requirement that your child is tested and therefore they can attend school without having taken a test, as we return to school, unless they develop COVID 19 symptoms.

We will support our students throughout, but please contact us if you have any questions. You can call the school office on 01752 402679.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ms A Perry', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Ms A Perry
Deputy Headteacher