



NHS Test and Trace: COVID-19 January Testing for Secondary Pupils

December 2021

Dear all,

As you may be aware the Department for Education has requested that all Secondary schools again facilitate the Covid-19 lateral testing of pupils in Years 7 and above on their return to school in January. We have been directed to supervise **one** test in school before pupils return to lessons, as well as continuing to supply pupils with home testing kits for twice weekly testing. **Whilst we will be conducting on site lateral flow testing at the start of term, it is still important that all those able to take a test on the evening of Monday 3rd January still do so please.**

1. Why are these tests happening?

Firstly, it is important to remind you that the lateral flow tests are for asymptomatic pupils only – **if your child has symptoms of Covid-19 they should isolate as previously and may take a PCR test at or from a local testing centre.** However, up to one third of people who have coronavirus are asymptomatic. By conducting lateral flow testing we will help to reduce the spread in school settings through asymptomatic transmission.

The DfE's decision has also been based on the fact that testing is more likely to happen, and to happen accurately, when in a supervised environment and it is important that as many pupils as possible receive an accurate test at the end of the Christmas holidays. Whilst we are **strongly encouraging all eligible Secondary pupils to be tested in school on the first day back,** as previously these tests are not compulsory, and testing will only be conducted for pupils for whom we have received formal written consent from their parent/guardian.

2. How does the testing work?

Pupils will take the test themselves; they will be supervised by staff who are familiar to the pupils. The lateral flow tests are quick and easy to undertake, using a swab of the nose and throat, or just a swab of the nose depending on the brand of test.

3. When will the tests happen?

Once again the DfE have advised that schools can stagger the start of term in order to test all eligible pupils. As we did in September, however, we have decided to set up two testing centres in school to reduce the need to do this as much as possible. Unfortunately, unlike in September, we do need to create a slight stagger on the first day due to it not being appropriate to keep pupils outside in January and currently an increased need for safety measures and social distancing.

The start of term – **for Tuesday 4th January ONLY** - will therefore be as follows **regardless of whether or not your child is being tested on site:**

- All Primary Year Groups as normal
- Years 7, 8 and 11 as normal
- **Years 9 and 10 a slightly later start- to arrive between 9.30am and 9.45am.**

We apologise for any inconvenience this will cause but are pleased that, by setting up two testing centres, we have not had to stagger the start of term any more than this or have any prolonged disruption to lessons.

4. How do I provide consent?

We have just been informed that prior consent is no longer valid. Therefore I am afraid that all pupils must now have new consent in January via the consent form also attached. Due to the proximity to the end of term, it will now not be possible for us to collate electronic consent forms – **therefore instead your child should simply bring a paper copy of the signed form with them on the morning of Tuesday 4th January. If they have their signed consent form we will conduct a test, if they don't they will go straight to lessons.** You do not need to inform us that your child is not being tested, only if you want them to be.

As we know not everyone will have access to a printer, we have enabled you to access the form in four ways:

- Print the form attached to this email.
- Go to our website where the form is also and print from here. <https://www.chichesterfreeschool.org.uk/coronavirus-update/>
- All Secondary pupils in school on Friday will be given a paper copy before they leave school.
- Spare paper copies will be in a box in main reception from Monday 13th to Friday 17th December 8am-4pm. The outside door will be open, so please do come in to collect one if you need one and cannot print your own.

5. Can my child be tested if they have had Covid in the last 90 days?

No, lateral flow tests should not be conducted on anyone who has Covid in the last 90 days. If this is the case for your child please do not fill in the consent form – on Tuesday 4th January they will go straight to lessons on arrival.

6. Do I need to set up anything on my child's phone? How will data be sent to the NHS?

No, your child will not need their own phone to upload any results – we will be doing this all centrally. For how the data will then be used, please see the Privacy Notice and Data Protection FAQs on our website at <https://www.chichesterfreeschool.org.uk/coronavirus-update/>

7. Further FAQs

What if my child tests positive?

If a pupil tests positive on a lateral flow device, we will contact you and ask you to collect your child from school. They will need to take a PCR test, and self-isolate until you receive the result. On receiving the result you will be given advice from NHS.

What happens if the test is negative?

You will be informed via the contact details provided on the consent form via the national service, not the School. Please be aware this can take a while to come through to you from the national centralised system, but we will be in touch straight away if there is a positive case – so no news straight away means that your child has tested negative.

What if my child tells you that they want to be tested, but I have not given consent?

We will only test pupils for whom we have the appropriate written consent from a parent or guardian.

What happens if I have given consent but my child refuses to have the test when in school?

Whilst we will try to support them and encourage them, we are not going to force anyone to have the test who is that uncomfortable about doing so.

Kind regards,

Mrs Louise New

Principal