



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

August 2021

Dear all,

I do hope you are all having a good summer. We are, of course, starting to look ahead now to the start of term. Whilst I will be in touch again before the end of Friday 3rd September to confirm any remaining Covid processes that we will have in place next term, I wanted to confirm to you now the plans for on site lateral flow Covid testing for Secondary pupils. As you may be aware, in a similar way to the system in place in March, the Department for Education has requested that all Secondary schools facilitate the testing of pupils in Years 7 and above on their return to school in September. We have been directed to supervise two tests in school, before home testing will continue again until at least the end of September.

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.

It is widely acknowledged that these tests are not 100% accurate, but as part of a regular testing regime they have been proven to pick up cases of those who are most contagious but not actually displaying symptoms and so would otherwise have not been tested. It is also important to note that a positive test now needs to be confirmed by a PCR test as well, reducing the impact of a false positive result.

Having two more tests conducted in school will ensure all pupils are reminded about how to test properly. 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 summer where more mixing is likely to have occurred.

As outlined below, we have once again worked hard to make this process as comfortable as possible for the pupils, and **we are therefore strongly encouraging all Secondary pupils to be tested in school twice during the first week of term.** However, 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?

Once again, the testing centre will be based in the Sports Hall. Pupils will be tested in small groups and we have created a sense of privacy around the testing bays themselves to help pupils who are feeling nervous or anxious. We have a variety of CFS staff on hand to support pupils. All staff have completed thorough training, both in person and through completing a variety of online training and assessments.

Pupils will take the test themselves; they will be supervised by trained 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 being used.

3. When will the tests happen?

Unlike in March, we do not need to stagger the pupils' return to school as pupils can be in class before they take the test, due to altered processes around close contacts – as outlined in the FAQs below. Therefore all Secondary pupils should arrive as normal on Monday 6th September and will have their first test at some point during the day. The second test will take place on Thursday 9th September – complying with the recommended 3-5 day gap.

If your child has been testing at home last term, and they still have a test available, we ask that they do test at home on the Sunday evening as well. This will help pick up any cases before the return to school, but the Monday test will provide an extra level of safety and of course not all pupils will have test kits remaining.

4. How do I provide consent?

As mentioned, we will only test pupils for whom we have received the appropriate written consent, granted by one parent/guardian. Consent will be determined as follows.

1. As a default, **we will assume that your position is the same as it was in March unless we hear otherwise. If this is the case, no action is needed from you:**
 - a. If you provided consent for your child in March, and you wish for them to be tested in school again in September then you **do not** need to provide consent again.
 - b. If you did not give consent in March, and you still do not give consent, then we will not test your child. Remember you do not have to opt out, you only have to formally opt in.
2. However, **if your child was at a different school in March – even if consent was given there – or your position has changed, you need to take the following action please:**
 - a. If you gave consent in March, but now wish to withdraw this, please email absence@chichesterfreeschool.org.uk by **8am on Thursday 2nd September** stating that you withdraw consent. If this is the case, please make it clear whether this is you withdrawing consent just for on site testing, or if you no longer wish for your child to receive home testing kits either. We can only provide home testing kits for pupils who have had supervised testing on site, but the March tests still count towards this. So it may be that you do not wish for your child to be tested on site again – although we do strongly encourage this – but wish for them to keep receiving the home kits from the second week onwards. **Please do make this clear in the email; if there is any ambiguity about what consent you are withdrawing we will not be able to keep issuing the home testing kits either.**
 - b. If you did not give consent in March, **or your child was at a different school**, but you now wish for your child to be tested in school then please complete the consent form. This can be found at <https://www.chichesterfreeschool.org.uk/back-to-school/>

Please return this to the school by emailing absence@chichesterfreeschool.org.uk. by 8am Thursday 2nd September. We must receive this form from a parent email address. Alternatively you can print the form and drop it into main reception. Pupils are able to bring a copy of the form with them on the day – printed out and signed by you (we cannot accept photographs etc of the form on their phone). However, it will make the process far smoother for everyone if the form is returned to us in advance please.

5. 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/back-to-school/>

6. What will be happening with home testing?

This will begin again from the second week, and Mr Phillips will be in touch at the start of term to remind pupils and parents about how to use the home tests. Home testing kits will only be available to pupils for whom we have conducted supervised tests in school, either in March, September or both.

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 about your next steps, but usually a negative result will mean that your child can return to school, and positive will mean that self-isolation must continue.

What happens if the test is negative?

While a small number of pupils may need to repeat the test if the first test was invalid or void for some reason, pupils who test negative will be able to stay in school and resume their activities as normal. Parents or legal guardians 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 other pupils have been in close contact with someone in school who tests positive?

This is the new guidance directly from the revised school document:

From 19 July 2021, in school contacts will now be identified via NHS Test and Trace and education settings will no longer be expected to undertake contact tracing.

From 16 August 2021, children under the age of 18 years old will no longer be required to self-isolate if they are contacted by NHS Test and Trace as a close contact of a positive COVID-19 case. Instead, children will be contacted by NHS Test and Trace, informed they have been in close contact with a positive case and advised to take a PCR test. We would encourage all individuals to take a PCR test if advised to do so.

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 regardless of what the pupil tells us in person.

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,. However if we have consent from you, and so you are expecting them to be tested, we will contact you to let you know that this has happened.

Kind regards,

Mrs Louise New

Principal