

22nd March 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

Up to one in three people who have COVID-19 can spread the virus without knowing. This is because they have no symptoms at all. To reduce the spread of the virus in the community, we need to identify those individuals. We can do this by encouraging students to carry out individual tests at home, twice every week, 3-4 days apart. When our students returned to school at the beginning of March, we offered them the opportunity to be tested in our on-site test centre, to make the return to school safer for everyone (students and staff). We are now able to make home testing kits available to all students (and all staff).

How will this work? Students will receive their test kits from Mrs Winterburn and her team during tutor time. These tests are free of charge. Students will receive a box containing 3 full testing kits and a leaflet describing how to take the test and report the results. We would like students to take a test twice each week, in the evening before school on Sundays and Wednesdays. All results must be reported to [NHS Test and Trace](#). Additionally, you will need to contact the school by telephone to inform us if any of the tests taken produce a positive result.

How do you take the test? Students will be shown a video of how to administer, process and record the results of the test during an assembly. If they need to revisit these instructions, the assembly can be found [here](#). Help and support is available, in a variety of different languages which can be found [here](#). There is no need to store any *used test equipment* after the test result has been reported. It can all be disposed of in your normal bin (household waste). These tests do not replace symptomatic testing. If you or your child have any symptoms, you should [self-isolate immediately](#), book a PCR test and follow national guidelines.

What should you do if the test is positive? If any of the test results are positive, your child, your household and any support bubbles you are part of should [self-isolate immediately](#) for 10 days, in line with NHS Test and Trace guidance. You will need to report the positive result to both [NHS Test and Trace](#) and the school, so that we can trace any close contacts who might also be at risk. You should [order a PCR test](#) for all positive results recorded when testing at home. If the result of the test is unclear (void) you should do another test.

Negative and void results should also be reported to [NHS Test & Trace](#). A negative result does not guarantee that you are not carrying the virus. So, you should continue to observe social distancing, and follow other measures to reduce transmission such as wearing a face mask and regularly washing your hands for 20 seconds. If you or anyone in your household gets symptoms of the virus you should follow [national guidelines on self-isolation and testing](#).

Why take part? Taking part in testing is voluntary and all students will be able to attend school whether they choose to take part in home-testing or not. We would strongly encourage all students to take part. Testing at home will allow your child and other students to attend school as safely as possible and reduce the need for sending bubbles/groups home, which would be a particular concern for Y11 and Y13 at this time. Please contact covid@whitleyacademy.com if you have any questions or concerns about home testing.

Thank you for your support.



Miss S.A. Bloom

Deputy Headteacher

Some frequently asked questions

Do I need to give consent?

Students and parents do not need to give written consent to take part in the home testing programme. Please read the information below on how personal information and test results are shared and the privacy notice attached. Once you open the kit you should take the test and report the results of the tests to [NHS Test & Trace](#) regardless of the result (positive, negative, or void). A positive result should also be reported to the school by telephone.

Can my child take the test themselves?

Students aged 18 and over should do the test themselves and report the result, with help if they need it. Students aged 12-17 should do the test themselves with adult supervision. The adult may help the student to take the test if they need support. Students aged 11 must be tested by an adult and the adult must report the result.

Reporting problems or issues with testing

If there is an issue with the test kit, for example something is missing, please report it by calling **119** and please also tell the school. If an accident or injury happens whilst using the test kit, please seek medical care by calling 111 (or 999 if it is an emergency). Please also report what happened using this website:

<https://coronavirus-yellowcard.mhra.gov.uk/>

What type of tests will be used?

We will be sending home Lateral Flow Device (LFD) tests. They are a fast and simple way to test people who do not have symptoms of COVID-19, but who may still be spreading the virus. The tests are easy to use and give results in 30 minutes. Further information: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/understanding-lateral-flow-antigen-testing-for-people-without-symptoms>

Are LFD tests accurate?

Lateral Flow Devices identify people who are likely to be infectious. These individuals tend to spread the virus to many people and so identifying them through this test is important. These tests have been widely and successfully used to detect COVID-19 in asymptomatic individuals and are approved by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA). The speed and convenience of the tests supports the detection of the virus in asymptomatic individuals, who would not otherwise have got tested.

The tests are highly specific, with low chance of false positives. They are also very sensitive and are able to identify the majority of the most infectious yet asymptomatic individuals. Extensive evaluation has been carried out on the tests and it shows that they are both accurate and sensitive enough to be used in the community for screening and surveillance purposes.

It is important to remember that these tests are only an aid to help stop the spread of the virus and you should continue to follow other guidance such as on wearing face coverings and social distancing.

How are LFD tests different to PCR tests?

There are 2 main types of test to check if you have coronavirus:

- polymerase chain reaction (PCR) tests check for the genetic material (RNA) of the virus in the sample - you send the sample for processing at a lab
- lateral flow device (LFD) tests detect proteins called 'antigens' produced by the virus
LFD tests give rapid results, in 30 minutes after taking the test.

What does it mean if my child has a positive result?

If your child has a positive antigen LFD test result they, their household and any support bubbles they are part of should self-isolate immediately in line with NHS Test and Trace guidance for 10 days. You need to report your result to both NHS Test & Trace and your school. You should order a confirmatory PCR test if you are testing at home (confirmatory PCR tests are not needed if the test was conducted at the Asymptomatic Test Site at school).

You can [book a test here](#).

What does it mean if my child has a negative result?

A negative result does not guarantee that your child is not carrying the virus. So, you should continue to follow social distancing, and other measures to reduce transmission such as wearing a face mask and regularly washing your hands.

What if my child has a void result?

If the result of the test is unclear (void), they should take another one. If the next test is also void, your child should take a PCR test. You can [book a test here](#).

All test results need to be reported to both [NHS Test & Trace](#)

Do I need to send the test to a lab?

No. The LFDs supplied do not need to be sent to a laboratory to get a result and can give a quick result in around 30 minutes. Guidance on self-testing is contained in the 'Instructions for Use' leaflet, which comes with the test kit. There is also a useful video to show you how to take the test [here](#).

How do you report the result?

All results whether positive, negative or void should be reported using this [service](#). You also need to tell the school if the test result is positive. You will receive a text or email from NHS Test & Trace confirming that you have reported your test result.

All test results need to be reported to both [NHS Test & Trace](#)

Can I or someone else in my household use a test kit sent home from school?

No, however whole families and households with primary school, secondary school, and college age children, including childcare and support bubbles, will be able to test themselves twice every week from home. This testing can be accessed through the following channels:

- get a rapid test at work, through workplace testing. Ask your employer for more information
- attend a test site to get tested where you will be able to see how to take the test or pick up tests to do at home (you can find your nearest test site via the postcode checker www.gov.uk/find-covid-19-lateral-flow-test-site or check your local council website)
- collect tests to do at home, find your nearest collection site [COVID Test Finder \(test-and-trace.nhs.uk\)](https://test-and-trace.nhs.uk)

If these options are not possible, there will be a supply of rapid tests for order online for people who need them the most. More information can be found on www.gov.uk/order-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-tests

There is [more information available about testing for households and bubbles of students](#).

How will personal information and test results be shared?

When your child takes a Lateral Flow test, you need to report the result. This is so that their test result can be traced, which means that you need to share some information about your child.

You need to tell the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC):

- your child's name
- your child's test result
- the reference number on the test Kit

You will also need to tell your child's school or college their test result.

Under UK law, your child's school or college can collect and store test result data because it is in the 'public interest'. This means that your child's data helps us to stop the spread of the virus, and to keep your children in school. For example, we will tell your child to self-isolate if they get a positive test result.

Schools and colleges will only share information with the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) if the test kits used are found to be faulty. If this happens, DHSC will use our information to contact people who used the faulty tests, so that they can be tested again. This will ensure that testing is accurate and helps keep us all safe.

When you report test results online, you are sharing information with DHSC. They may share the information with your GP, local government, NHS, and Public Health England. This is so that they can offer your family health services and guidance if your child needs to self-isolate. They might also use your child's data anonymously (without their name or contact information) to research COVID-19, and improve our understanding of the virus. For more information on how personal data is used for testing please see the detailed privacy notice attached.

