



22 December 2020

Dear Parent or guardian

NHS Test and Trace: COVID-19 testing for staff and students

I am sure you are all aware now of the governments drive to roll out mass testing in schools. This testing is focussing on those without coronavirus symptoms and uses the new, quicker COVID-19 tests, known as 'lateral flow tests'.

Along with the other protective measures we are taking, these tests will help staff and students to remain in school safely. Up to one third of people who have coronavirus experience no symptoms. By testing we will help to stop the virus spread and help reduce the number of students having to self-isolate for being a close contact to an infected case. **The test is completely voluntary**, but I would encourage everyone to take it.

We will be testing as many staff as possible and Year 11 students who want to participate on the 7th and 8th January 2021. From the 11th we will switch to testing any member of staff or student identified as being a close contact. At this current time, we are not looking to test the rest of the student population from the 11th January except where students are identified as a close contact. Of course, if this situation changes then I will write to you again with the amended arrangements.

An instructional leaflet is available at: [How to do your test: COVID 19 instruction leaflet for schools \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/87122/How_to_do_your_test_COVID_19_instruction_leaflet_for_schools.pdf).

I must stress that **no** student will be tested without prior consent being received. Since any student could be identified as a close contact it is important that we receive the necessary documentation from you. So, if you are happy for your child to be tested, please fill in the enclosed registration/consent statement (one per student) and return it to the school medical team via email (medical@bramhallhigh.stockport.sch.uk) or in person once the students return on the 11th January (7th January for Year 11, vulnerable or critical worker students).

Those taking the test will be supervised by trained staff. The 'lateral flow' tests are quick and easy using a swab of your nose and throat. For under 18s, staff can oversee the swab process.

Results (which take around half an hour from testing) will be shared directly with staff and students participating. Where participants are under 16, parents or legal guardians will also be informed.

The tests have been proven to work - in validation studies conducted by Oxford University and Public Health England, they were shown to be as accurate in identifying a case as a PCR test (99.68% specificity). The tests have lower sensitivity, but they are better at picking up cases when a person has higher viral load, hence the need to test frequently.

Testing will be offered free of charge. Please if there are any further questions then please do not hesitate to contact the school. The details in this letter are subject to change at very short notice so please continue to check for notices from school.

Yours sincerely

Mr P Williams

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What if a pupil tests positive?

Participating staff and pupils who test positive will be informed about their results individually. Where participants are under 16, parents or legal guardians will also be notified. Guidance on safe travel and additional precautions will be provided along with test results.

Pupils will need to take a further 'PCR test' (similar to those done in local and regional testing sites) on the same day (or as soon as possible). To book a test you can go to www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test or call 119 to book a follow-up test. When ordering a PCR test yourselves, they should choose to visit a drive-through test site if possible, as it is faster than requesting a home test. In exceptional circumstances the school will be able to provide a PCR test kits to perform at home.

During this time while they wait for the PCR result (via text / email) they will need to self-isolate.

If the PCR test returns a positive result you will have to self-isolate and follow the guidance from NHS Test and Trace.

What happens if the test is negative?

They will be able to stay in school and resume their activities as normal. A pupil will only be told if they test positive on a 'lateral flow' test, so if you do not hear you can assume it was negative. A small number of pupils may need to repeat the test if the first test was invalid or void for some reason.

What if a close contact at school/college tests positive?

Any identified close contacts will be able to return to school if they agree to be tested once a day for 7 days and the test is negative. If they do not want to take the test, they will need to self-isolate as per the national guidelines. This does not apply to household members or close contacts outside of school who will still need to self-isolate. Further details will be provided at the time, but if you would prefer to self-isolate instead of doing daily testing, you can.

What if my child develops symptoms?

This testing programme at school is for people with no symptoms. If your child 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 (England, Wales and Northern Ireland) or 0300 303 2713 (Scotland) or visiting <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>.

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