

7th January 2021

**NHS Test and Trace: COVID-19 testing for students at Harrogate High School and Skipton Girls' High School.**

Dear Parents, Carers,

Welcome back to the Spring Term 2021. We very much hope you've had a restful Christmas break and some quality family time amidst the turbulence of the pandemic and the last few days.

As we prepare for the spring term, we are working hard to keep all our Trust schools as safe as possible. You may have heard on the media that testing for those without coronavirus symptoms is beginning across the country using 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 to keep our Trust schools open as safely as possible. The test is voluntary, but we would encourage everyone to take it.

The 'lateral flow' tests are quick and easy, using a swab of the nose and throat and are self-administered by pupils. Trained staff will oversee the swab process. I enclose an instructional leaflet with some more information.

**It is our ambition to begin testing all staff and secondary school age Keyworker/Vulnerable students who are in attendance at school from Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> January 2021, with testing beginning for other students upon their return to school after lockdown.**

- For children who are in Years 7-11, parents/carers need to provide **consent for testing** on the student's behalf. **Please complete the online form** to let us know if you are happy for your child to self-administer the test under supervised conditions. [Click here](#).
- Students who are in Years 12 and 13 are deemed old enough to provide their own consent to being tested, but we would be grateful if parents/carers would also discuss this with the pupil. Pupils in these year groups will be emailed a link to the form to self-complete.

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

Also, with this letter please find attached a specific COVID Testing Privacy Notice which lets you know how your personal data is being used and kept safe, along with FAQs relating to Data Protection.

We know these tests 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 his/her viral load, hence the need to test frequently.

We will support our staff and students throughout, but please don't hesitate to contact us if you need this information in any other language or format or if you have any questions.

Yours faithfully,

Jenn Plews  
Trust Leader/CEO

Mark Turner  
Headteacher  
Skipton Girls' High School

Charlotte Clarke  
Headteacher  
Harrogate High School

## **FAQs COVID Testing in Schools**

### **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). Your child's school will be able to provide these PCR test kits to perform at home or you can go to [www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test](https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test) or call 119 to book a follow-up test. If 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.

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 tests positive?**

**A close contact of someone in school who has tested positive for COVID-19 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>.