



16th July 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

COVID-19 testing for staff and students

We are continually committed to working to keep our school as safe as possible. You may have heard that testing for those **without** coronavirus symptoms is continuing across the country using COVID-19 'lateral flow tests' (also referred to as LFT and LFD tests).

Up to one third of people who have coronavirus experience no symptoms.

When we return to school on Monday 6th September, we will be reintroducing LFT tests for our students. By testing, we will help to stop the virus spread and keep our staff and students safe. The test is voluntary, but I would encourage every child to take it. **These tests will take place twice during the first week back.**

If you are happy for your child to be tested in school when we return in September, please click on the link below to give your consent. **Consent must be received by 3.30 pm (19th July 2021).**

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/PKY8P98>

Those taking the test will be supervised by trained staff. The 'lateral flow' tests are quick and staff will oversee the swab process. You may find the attached "social story" for having a Coronavirus test in school useful and help to explain everything involved regarding the administering of the test.

Your child's details will be registered by the school for the purpose of this testing process. Please refer to the attached privacy statement for further information.

What if a pupil tests positive?

Any pupil testing positive on a LFD test 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). 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 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.

Please be advised that if your child does test positive, **we will telephone you straight away** and they will need to be collected **immediately**.

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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 higher viral load, hence the need to test frequently.

What happens if the test is negative?

They will be able to stay in school/college 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 from us, 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?

A close contact of someone in school/college who has tested positive for COVID-19 will be able to return to school/college 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/college 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/college 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>.

We will support our staff and pupils throughout, but please contact us if you need this information in any other language or format or if you have any questions. You can call the office on 01375 372723 or email admin@treetops.thurrock.sch.uk.

Yours sincerely



Mr J Brewer
Head teacher