



Alder Community High School

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

Dear Parent/Carer

We are working to keep our school as safe as possible. You may have heard that testing for those without coronavirus symptoms is beginning across the country using new, quicker COVID-19 tests known as 'lateral flow device' 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 school open as safely as possible. The test is voluntary, but I would encourage everyone to participate.

We started testing all staff who wanted to participate, during week commencing 11th January 2021. This has proved popular, with a high uptake of staff.

We will roll this out and begin testing the students who are in school during week commencing 18th January 2021. Initially, students will be tested twice, with the second test being done 3 to 5 days after the first.

The test is carried out by self-swabbing. 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. I enclose an instructional leaflet with some more information of how the test is carried out. If you feel that your child would benefit from a parent or carer administering the test, please do let us know as we will be able to accommodate this.

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.

Consent

If you are happy for your child to take part in the testing programme, please complete the consent form [by following this link](#), a paper copy of the consent form is available on request. If your child has already turned 16 he/she should complete the consent form themselves.

What if my child has already tested positive previously for Covid-19?

Current advice is that for most, a previous confirmed Covid-19 diagnosis in the last 90 days is likely to make testing with an LFD antigen test not necessary.



What if my child tests positive?

If a student tests positive, we will contact you immediately to let you know. A member of staff will discreetly collect your child from their classroom and take them to a safe waiting area until you are able to collect them or they have permission to walk home. We will make sure that your child is reassured at this stage. Guidance on safe travel and additional precautions will be provided along with test results. They 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 yourself, you should choose to visit a drive-through test site if possible, as it is faster than requesting a home test.

During this time while you wait for the PCR result (via text / email) your household will need to self-isolate. If the PCR test returns a positive result they will have to self-isolate and follow the guidance from NHS Test and Trace.

What happens if the test is negative?

Your child will be able to stay in school and resume their activities as normal. You 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 individuals may need to repeat the test if the first test was invalid or void for some reason.

Those who receive a negative test result from an LFD test must still follow social distancing guidance, wear face coverings when appropriate and wash their hands regularly.

What if I have been in close contact with someone at school who 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 for your child to self-isolate instead of doing daily testing, they can.

What if my child has Covid-19 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) your household 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 students 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 0161 368 5132 or e mail admin@alderchs.uk

Yours faithfully,



Richard O'Regan



Headteacher

