



31 December 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

Start of the Spring Term - Update

Yesterday the government announced that the arrangements for the start of the spring term have changed. All secondary schools will be open for the following groups of students:-

Tuesday 5 – Friday 8 January 2021 - students who are vulnerable or from a family where there is a key worker. Should you require this provision, please contact the school on Monday 4 January 2021 if you haven't already done so. Plus those students in year 10, 11, 12 and 13 who have an external examination in January.

Monday 11 – Friday 15 January 2021 - students who are vulnerable or from a family where there is a key worker. Plus all students in year 11 and 13.

Monday 18 – Friday 22 January 2021 - all students.

From Tuesday 5 January all lessons will be taught online for those students at home.

Primary schools will be open as normal.

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

We are working to keep our schools 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 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 schools open as safely as possible. The test is voluntary, but I would encourage everyone to take it.

We will be testing all staff and secondary school age students where consent is given, from week commencing 4 January 2021 or as soon as possible.

If you are happy for your child to be tested, please see the instructional leaflet and fill in the consent form by using this link <https://bhcet.org.uk/covid19> and then clicking on the school name for your child.

Please complete one form per child.



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

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.

Testing will be offered free of charge.

What if a student tests positive?

Participating staff and students 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.

Students 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). The 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, 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 they 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 student 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 students 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.



**Bishop
Hogarth**

Catholic Education Trust

CEO: M Regan OBE, DL M.Ed., B.Ed (Hons), FCIEA, CEA
Deputy CEO: M Shorten M.Ed., BA (Hons)
Chair of Directors: J Wilson BA (Hons), PGCE, NPQH
The Headlands, Darlington, DL3 8RW
T: 01325 254525 F: 01325 254335
E: admin@bishophogarthcet.org.uk
W: www.bishophogarthcet.org.uk

National Teaching School
designated by

National College for
Teaching & Leadership



What if my child develops symptoms?

This testing programme within our schools is for people with no symptoms and is not a substitute for the PCR test which is carried out at local centres. 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 (**do not send your child to school**), and book a PCR 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.

If you are unable to access or complete the form online please contact your son/daughter's school directly. Consent Forms should be completed by 5 January 2021. Contact details are available on the individual school website. Please note that all schools are closed until 4 January 2021

Yours sincerely

M Regan OBE DL
Chief Executive Officer