



2 January 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

Further to my letter of 31 December, I am writing to you to provide an update about plans for COVID-19 testing for secondary school students in York. This is a rapidly evolving situation, so please accept my apologies for writing to you again so soon.

Following the announcement on 30 December, delaying the full opening of secondary schools, the City of York Council's public health and education teams have worked with York Schools and Academies Board to develop plans to offer Lateral Flow Testing (LFT) for staff and students, to support the phased return to school from 11 January 2021. Whilst testing is optional, the Department for Education has made it clear that all secondary schools should promote and encourage LFT.

The offer of testing falls into two different phases:

1. Mass testing arrangements to support the phased return to school
2. Testing of students who are identified as confirmed contacts of a child who has had a positive COVID-19 test when students are back in school

#### Mass testing arrangements to support the phased return to school

In York the plan developed to support secondary schools offer mass testing for students will involve the offer of testing from two dedicated school testing sites at the University of York and York St John University. The York St John site will be open only for students in Year 11 and Year 13 from 4-7 January 2021. This will support their return to school from 11 January. Both testing sites will be open for all secondary aged students from Friday 8 January to support the full return to school from 18 January 2021. Tests on these sites will be administered to appropriate clinical standards, overseen by the City of York Public Health Team.

Parents/carers can book a time for a test using the following link:

<https://www.york.gov.uk/SymptomFreeCOVIDTest>

Bookings can be made for the York St John site using this link from 2 January, bookings will open for the University of York site from 8 January 2021.

Student under the age of 16 **must** be accompanied by a parent or carer when they visit the University testing sites. Students will be required to attend the testing centre twice in a period of 3-5 days prior to their return to school and the results of the tests will be shared with school.

If a student tests positive, they will be required to take a community based PCR test and to self-isolate until the result of the test is known. If the PCR test is negative, students will be able to attend school from 11 or 18 January dependent upon the return date for their year group.

If a student has tested positive in the 90 days prior to 4 January then it is not necessary for them to have a test if they have completed their isolation period. They **should not** be booked in for a test if they have not completed their 10 day isolation period.

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**HEADTEACHER:** Mr David Hewitt, BA (Hons), NPQH

**DEPUTY HEAD:** Mr A Haigh, BSc (Hons)

**DEPUTY HEAD:** Ms C Mann, BA (Hons)

***“Working together to achieve success”***

We strongly recommend that all students are tested before they return to school to minimise the risk of transmission of COVID-19 in school. These tests are voluntary and students who have not had a test will return to school in line with the staggered start to term. This is in line with Government guidance.

Once all students have returned to school on the 18 January, the testing arrangements described above will no longer be available for secondary school students.

#### Testing of students who are identified as confirmed contacts of a child who has had a positive COVID-19 test when students are back in school

During the week beginning 4 January, on site contact testing will be set up at school. From week beginning 11 January this will provide capacity to test students daily, for a period of 7 school days, if they are confirmed school based contacts of a child who has had a positive COVID-19 test. This will reduce the need for large numbers of students to self-isolate, preventing further disruption to their education.

These tests are optional and require consent to be obtained before being administered. We will provide further details about how personal data will be used, stored and when and how it will be disposed of next week. The personal data collected from school staff, students, parents and carers will only be used for the purposes of testing and consent can be withdrawn at any time. If consent is not given, for students identified as close contacts to have a daily test in school, they will have to self-isolate in line with current Government guidance. Once we have completed the setup of contact testing procedures in school, we will send you further information about how tests will be administered. This will allow you to make an informed decision about giving consent for testing if your child is identified as a close contact of a positive case in school

If a student has a positive result, from a lateral flow test, they will be asked to take a community based PCR test to confirm the positive result. Students receiving a positive result from the PCR test will then be required to self-isolate for 10 days.

It is important to remember that the introduction of lateral flow testing in schools is an additional layer of preventative response to COVID-19. We will continue to maintain the high quality control measures that school has had in place since March 2020. These remain an essential part of our work to reduce the likelihood of the transmission of COVID-19. These include bubbling Year groups, face mask wearing in communal areas and regular hand cleaning. A negative LFT result will not override requirements for students to continue to follow our expectations about these.

York schools have been very successful in implementing their prevention response and, as a result, school attendance has remained consistently above national averages throughout the pandemic. Much of this work has been carried out with the support of colleagues from City of York Council's public health and education teams.

The work to support schools in implementing testing is further testimony to the multi-agency approach that has been adopted so successfully in York. As a school community we are all indebted to the support colleagues from City of York Council's public health and education teams have given to help keep school open and working successfully during this global pandemic. I would also like to acknowledge the support given by the Universities of York and York St John in helping us offer a unified approach to mass testing across the City of York.

Online learning will be the main part of our educational provision for most of our students over the next two weeks. This provision is detailed in my letter dated 31 December. Whilst we know that our students will engage effectively with this learning, we are very much looking forward to seeing all students back in school for face to face teaching.

Yours sincerely

Dave Hewitt  
Headteacher