

Tuesday 23rd February 2021

Dear Families,

RE: Roll-out of mass coronavirus testing in schools

You will no doubt be aware, following the Prime Minister's announcement last night, learners will be returning to school from Monday 8th March 2021. The Headteacher will write to families in the coming days to outline our plans for re-opening.

As part of the government's plans for re-opening schools, schools will offer all learners access to a coronavirus test prior to their return to school in March, followed by two further coronavirus tests (3 to 5 days apart) once in school. Thereafter, families will be given the opportunity to test learners twice weekly at home. We are still awaiting details on the home testing kits for learners but once we have received this we will write to families again.

In this letter I want to outline how testing works, our plans for testing learners onsite at Longdendale on their return from the 8th March and to ask families to consent to their child's participation in testing.

Roll-out of mass testing

We are working to keep Longdendale as safe as possible. When schools re-open and learners return to school, we will be testing learners and staff in school without coronavirus symptoms using new, quicker COVID-19 tests known as 'lateral flow tests'.

Longdendale has established a coronavirus testing site within school and is currently testing, using Lateral Flow Tests (LFTs), all staff twice weekly and those learners who are currently accessing provision in school on their first day of accessing provision in school and then 3 to 5 days later.

Along with the other protective measures we are taking, these tests will help staff and learners 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 Longdendale open as safely as possible. The test is voluntary, but I would encourage everyone to take part in the testing programme.

I would be grateful if all families could complete the consent form for their child(ren)'s participation in the testing programme. Families who do not want their child to participate in the testing programme should still complete the consent form as there is an option to not give consent. Families only need to consent once for the testing programme. Should families wish to withdraw consent they can do this in writing at any time thereafter.

You can find the consent form by clicking [here](#).

I would be grateful if you could complete the consent form by midday on Thursday 25th February.



If you require a paper copy of this letter or consent form, please contact the office.

Please note that whilst we would encourage all learners to participate, your child's return to school is not conditional on them participating in the testing programme.

When will learners be tested?

Learners who participate in the testing programme will receive three tests, each three to five days apart. Their attendance at school is not conditional on them having been tested.

The families of participating learners will receive further information about when their child will access tests and when they will return to school once we have confirmed how many learners will be participating in the testing programme. We hope to be able to share this information with you by the middle of next week.

How does the test work?

When taking the test, learners will be supervised by trained staff. The 'lateral flow' tests are quick and easy, using a swab of your nose and throat. We expect all learners will swab themselves under supervision.

Results (which take around half an hour from testing) will be shared directly with participating families via text or phone call.

Testing will be offered free of charge.

What if a learner tests positive?

Participating learners who test positive will be informed about their results individually and arrangements will be made for them to go home. Families will be notified via telephone. Guidance on safe travel and additional precautions will be provided along with test results.

Learners and their household should self-isolate for 10 days.

What happens if the test is negative?

Learners who test negative will be able to stay in school and resume their activities as normal. Families will be informed of negative test results via text.

A small number of learners may need to repeat the test if the first test was invalid or void for some reason.

What if my child develops symptoms?

This testing programme at Longdendale 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, notify school and book a test by calling 119 or visiting <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>.

Further information

You will find further information on testing on our school's website:

- Click [here](#) for the testing privacy notice
- Click [here](#) for data protection FAQs
- Click [here](#) for FAQs about the testing programme

If you require any further information prior to giving consent please do check the information on our website or contact Dr Potter at school or via email at m.potter@lhs.aspireplus.org.uk.

With much thanks for your continued support.

Yours faithfully,

Mrs A Jones
Headteacher