

June 2021

Dear Families,

As you will no doubt be aware, Greater Manchester is part of an 'Enhanced Response Package' area due to the recent increases in the number of cases of Covid-19. Further to recent discussions involving all Tameside secondary schools, and on the advice of the local public health advisory board, we are taking part in a project run by the Department for Education and NHS Test and Trace to encourage participation in regular rapid testing amongst secondary school and college students.

Testing has been playing a vital role in the response to COVID-19. It is helping to break chains of transmission by identifying asymptomatic positive cases quickly. This means those who test positive can self-isolate, keeping other students in face-to-face education. Reporting all test results, positive or negative, also helps the health experts have a clearer picture of any potential outbreaks in different parts of the country in order to minimise the spread of wider transmission. That is why we would like all students at our school to take part in the project.

Currently, students take lateral flow device tests twice a week at home to detect asymptomatic cases of COVID-19 and report the results themselves, with the assistance of their parents or carers. As part of this project, we are now going to ask students to take at least one of their twice weekly tests at school. Students will be asked to self-swab and process the test (as they have been doing at home) in a designated area. A trained staff member will then monitor the test result as it develops, and will read and report the result on the students' behalf. This is different to the previous Asymptomatic Test Site (ATS) model where students self-swabbed and trained staff processed the test, as well as reading and reporting the result.

Testing in this way should make the process faster and easier for students compared to when they test and report themselves at home. It should also make it easier for trained staff to oversee the testing compared to the previous ATS model. This quicker process will encourage and support more students to participate in testing and report results.

When will supervised self-testing start?

We plan to start testing in this way from Wednesday 23rd June.

If parents have already given consent previously for testing they don't need to do so again, and your consent will be carried forward to this period of on-site testing. Please note that if you have previously given consent, but you now no longer wish your child to take part in the on-site testing, please contact school on admin@lhs.aspireplus.org.uk to confirm this before 8am on Wednesday 23rd June 2021.

On Wednesday 23rd June 2021, students need to ensure that they bring their home testing kit into school, so that they can use this to carry out one of these tests in our supervised testing site. Students will be provided with all the information to support them being able to carry out these tests as appropriate.

Students will still be testing twice each week, 3-4 days apart as per the current information on: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing/regular-rapid-coronavirus-tests-if-you-do-not-have-symptoms/>. To support with this, students should continue to carry out their lateral flow test at home using the kits provided every Sunday evening. Their second test will be carried out in school in our supervised setting.

What will happen if a student tests positive?

As before, if a student has a positive test result, they will need to self-isolate immediately in line with the [stay-at-home guidance until they receive their confirmatory PCR test](#). We will continue to manage and notify any close contacts of pupils/students with positive results.

It has been wonderful to have all of our students back in school full time since March 8th following the period of remote learning. We want to do everything we can to ensure that this remains the case for the rest of this academic year, and testing clearly plays a really important role in this. Thank you for your ongoing support during this time.

Yours sincerely,



Andrea Jones
Headteacher

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