



8th September 2020

Dear Parents

## Welcome back

Firstly, on behalf of all the staff I would like to say what a pleasure it is to have the pupils back in school. They, in turn, have been amazing and have settled really well.

In these times, we are getting updates daily from our CCC Health and Safety team. To try and clarify the position a little our latest guidance says

- There is high demand for testing.
- Some parents are finding they cannot book a local COVID test **for their child** via the national system and are being directed to test centers many miles from home.
- If parents cannot book a test **for their child**, school can make a referral to the local NHS system on their behalf and a test will be offered at a local NHS site. **Parents cannot access testing for themselves via this route.**
- Only those with COVID-19 symptoms (temperature, cough, or loss of sense of taste/smell) will be offered a test.
- Full details below.

**Some parents are reporting that they can't arrange testing for their children, or are being advised to travel long distances to access drive-through testing centers.**

All types of COVID-19 testing have seen a significant rise in demand over the past two weeks and as a result, it is currently more difficult to access testing.

Testing slots for drive-through and walk through centres and home testing kits are made available via the national website in batches. Once they are all booked, these testing options are no longer shown on the website and the website will only show those testing options that still have capacity. So if all the testing slots are booked up for Cumbria, the website will show the next nearest sites with testing availability. This is why some people see testing sites a long distance away being shown on the website.

In the case where no testing is being shown as available, it is worth waiting and trying again either first thing in the morning, or after 6pm at night (as this is generally when batches are released).



The testing website: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-and-tracing/get-a-test-to-check-if-you-have-coronavirus/>

### Why is the testing getting booked up so quickly?

Testing is getting booked up quickly due to a genuine rise in demand. Nationally, we are seeing an increase in the number of people testing positive for COVID-19 (even though the amount of testing has not changed). We are also going into the autumn/winter period when we see a lot more viral infections circulating that can cause high temperatures and coughs.

In addition, we are also seeing a lot of people getting tested when they have other symptoms, such as runny noses and sore throats or if they are a contact of a positive case.

In order to help manage capacity and keep testing available for people that really need it, it is important that:

- Parents only book testing for their children if they are showing one or more of the three recognised symptoms of COVID-19 (high temperature, new continuous cough or a change to/loss of sense of taste or smell). Children who have other symptoms in the absence of those listed above (e.g. sore throats) **should not** be getting tested.
- **NHS guidance** - a new, continuous cough - coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours - if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual. At the end of a coughing period, it may leave breathing difficulties ie unable to catch breath.
- Parents should only book testing if their children have symptoms. Individuals identified as close contacts of positive cases do not need to be tested unless they develop symptoms. Advice is available by calling NHS 111 or accessing the NHS 111 online website <https://111.nhs.uk>

For pupils in year groups - reception year groups to year 13, I encourage parents, to return permission slips for the nasal flu vaccination programme. Clinic will be held in school, date to be confirmed shortly.

As ever, the safety of pupils is our paramount concern.

Sam and SLT

