

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

4 January 2021

Dear parent/carer,

I wrote to you last week explaining the government's national plan for testing staff and students in schools using new, quicker COVID-19 tests known as 'lateral flow tests' (LFT). This message contains more information about the testing programme as it will operate at The Charter School East Dulwich.

Along with the other protective measures we are taking, these tests will help staff and students to return to school safely. The test is voluntary, but I would encourage everyone to take it.

Why are we testing?

Up to one-third of people who catch COVID-19 experience no symptoms, meaning that they are not picked up by existing public health measures. LFTs are designed to work on people who do not show symptoms associated with COVID-19.

What form does the test take?

LFTs are quick and easy using a swab of your nose and throat. Students taking the test will be supervised by trained staff. Results (which take around half an hour from testing) will be shared directly with staff and students participating. I enclose a government instructional leaflet with some more information.

When will testing start?

We will begin making tests available to all staff and students from later this week. Testing will be offered free of charge. We anticipate that it will take at least two weeks to test every student in the school.

How do I give consent?

If you are happy for your child to be tested, please fill in [this online form](#). The form should take two or three minutes to complete. You must complete a consent form for **each** of your children in school. Please note: your child **cannot** be tested unless you complete the form. If you cannot access the form for any reason please contact the school on 0203 873 2290 or office@chartereastdulwich.org.uk.

What happens after the test?

We will inform parents of any **positive** diagnosis of Covid-19, but will **not** confirm negative diagnoses so that school resources can be invested in further preventive measures. If you do not hear from us, you can assume that the test result was negative and that your child can continue to attend school as normal. A small number of pupils may need to repeat the test if the first test was invalid or void for some reason.

Students who do test positive 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 provide these PCR test kits to perform at home. You can also go to www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test or call 119 to book a follow-up test. If ordering a PCR test yourself, we

advise you 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) your child will not be allowed to return to school and will need to self-isolate. If the PCR test returns a positive result you will have to self-isolate and follow the guidance from NHS Test and Trace.

It is all-but-inevitable that we will have positive cases. If a student tests negative but is a close contact of someone who has tested positive, they will be able to return to school if they agree to be tested every day for seven days. They can remain in school for as long as they continue to test 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.

What if my child develops symptoms?

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

We will support our students and parents throughout, but please contact us if you need this information in any other language or format or if you have any questions. You can call the school office on 020 3873 2290 or office@chartereastdulwich.org.uk using the subject line "Testing".

Yours faithfully,

Mr. A. Crossman
Headteacher