



St. Thomas More High School

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26th February 2021

Dear Parent/Carer,

NHS Test and Trace: COVID-19 testing for Students

You may have heard that testing for those without coronavirus symptoms is beginning across the country using the new, quicker COVID-19 tests known as 'lateral flow devices'. This letter is to help give you more information about the testing programme in our school as we prepare to welcome students back from 8th March.

Along with the other protective measures we are taking, these tests will help staff and students 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 our school open as safely as possible. Staff at St Thomas More have all now been given home testing kits and are using them as we prepare to welcome your sons and daughters back to school.

All pupils and staff are being asked to test BEFORE they return to school at a local community test centre and report their result. Students who have consent from parents/carers will then be able to access two subsequent tests within the first two weeks during their school day or again with you, their primary educators, at their local community testing site. Participation is optional but I would encourage everyone to take part. Testing will be offered free of charge.

Those taking the test will be supervised by trained staff and volunteers. The lateral flow tests are quick and easy to undertake, using a swab of the nose and throat. Results (which take around half an hour from testing) will be shared directly with the individual participant. The school will inform and support the student following a positive test result. Where participants are under 16, parents or legal guardians will also be informed. The student will also receive a text/email notification of a positive or negative result from the online NHS system.

If you are happy for your child to be tested at our local testing site as part of their school day on their return, please complete this [Consent Form](#) **one form for each child**. Please note that consent is to test and to the sharing of data with NHS Track & Trace, as laid out in the privacy statement.

Students over the age of 16 may give their own consent, if preferred. In this case, please discuss this with them and ensure they complete the form. Non-consent may also be recorded on the form. We will send reminders to complete the consent form next week.

What if my child tests positive?

If a pupil tests positive on a lateral flow device, they will need to self-isolate for 10 days and follow the guidance from NHS Test and Trace.

What happens if the test is negative?

While a small number of pupils may need to repeat the test if the first test was invalid or void for some reason, pupils who test negative will be able to stay in school and resume their activities as normal. Pupils will be informed of negative test results via text/email. Where participants are under 16, parents or legal guardians will also be informed.

What if staff or students have been in close contact with someone in school who tests positive?

The staff member or student will be notified that they are a close contact by the school and will need to self-isolate for 10 days in line with Government guidance.

What if my child develops symptoms?

This testing programme at school is for people with no symptoms. If your child develops symptoms at any time (including 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 staff and pupils throughout, but please contact us if you have any questions. You can contact the office by email office@st-thomasmore.southend.sch.uk

Yours faithfully,



Mrs G Ackred
Headteacher