



12th January 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

NHS TEST AND TRACE: COVID-19 TESTING FOR STAFF AND STUDENTS

We are working to keep our school as safe as possible. It is unfortunate that we had return to remote teaching for all except for vulnerable students and the children of key workers, but we are following Government guidelines and will return to on site provision as soon as we are able.

You may have heard that testing for those without Coronavirus symptoms has started using new, quicker COVID-19 tests known as 'lateral flow tests'. We want to be prepared for your child to return to school, if your child is a vulnerable child or you are a key worker, to secure their presence on site. The testing will commence before your child returns to school after half term and those taking the test will be supervised by NHS staff who have trained and supported Cardinal Pole staff. The 'lateral flow' tests are quick and easy using a swab of the nose and throat. **I enclose an agreement to test form which you need to return to the school office** and an instructional leaflet on how to carry out the swab tests for your child to read in advance. Following the test (which take around half an hour from testing), results will be shared. Where participants are under 16, parents/carers will be informed later that day.

What if a student tests positive?

Participating students who test positive will need to self-isolate and follow the guidance from NHS Test and Trace. Where participants are under 16, parents or legal guardians will be notified. This means:

- They will need to self-isolate for 10 days from the date of the test;
- You can stop self-isolating on day 11 if they haven't had a high temperature for 48 hours and are well;
- People they live with must self-isolate for 10 days from when they start self-isolating.

Guidance on safe travel and additional precautions will be provided along with test results.

Students 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) if positive. The School may be able to provide these PCR test kits to perform at home if available or you can go to www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test or call 119 to book a follow-up test. If ordering a PCR test, you should choose 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 and family will need to self-isolate.

If the PCR test returns a positive result you will have to continue to self-isolate and follow the guidance from NHS Test and Trace.

Does that mean the lateral flow tests aren't conclusive? There is a low chance of false positive tests – that is why the secondary test is necessary. There is also a low chance that lateral flow tests do not pick up positive cases because they are not as sensitive as lab-based tests. That is why there will be serial tests for close contacts of positive cases.

If the test is negative then students and teachers will be able to carry on as usual. So if you do not hear, you can assume it was negative.

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

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. The test is voluntary, but I would encourage everyone to take it.

We will be testing all staff and students if attending site, week commencing 22nd February 2021 if schools re-open.

If you are happy for your child to be tested, please fill in the form below and the enclosed consent statement (one per student) and return it to the school office via email on enquiries@cardinalpole.co.uk with "Testing" in the subject heading.

We are advised that these tests work - in validation studies conducted by Oxford University and Public Health England, they were shown to be as accurate in identifying a case as a PCR test (99.68% specificity). Given the high R rate in London, and the need to keep our community safe, we are encouraging all to participate.

Testing will be offered free of charge.

What if a close contact at school tests positive?

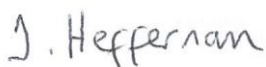
A close contact of someone in school who has tested positive for COVID-19 will be able to return to school if they agree to be tested once a day for 7 days (assuming that the tests are available) and the test is negative. If they do not want to take the test, or if the tests are not available on site, 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 at Cardinal Pole Catholic School 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 (England, Wales and Northern Ireland) or 0300 303 2713 (Scotland) or visiting <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>

We will support our staff and students throughout, but please contact us if you need this information or if you have any questions. You can call the office on 020 8985 5150 or email enquiries@cardinalpole.co.uk

Yours sincerely



Ms J Heffernan
HEADTEACHER