



4 January 2021

Dear Parent/Carer,

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

We continue to work hard to keep our school and wider community as safe as possible. You may have heard that testing for those without coronavirus symptoms is beginning across the country using new, quicker COVID-19 tests known as 'lateral flow tests'.

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.

Our aim is to test as many staff and students who want to participate as possible, commencing from 6 January 2021. We would hope to have completed testing by week commencing 18 January 2021. Staff will be tested weekly thereafter and close contacts, without symptoms, of any person who has tested positively will be given the option of daily testing as an alternative to self-isolation.

If you are happy for your child to be tested, please complete the registration form and consent statement (one per student) and return it as soon as possible to the school office by email info@billericayschool.com or via your child when they attend for their test. Students 16 and over may complete their own consent forms. The forms and further information can be found on our website:

<https://www.billericayschool.com/coronavirus-update/information-on-testing/>

Those taking the test will be supervised by trained staff. The 'lateral flow' tests are quick and easy using a swab of your nose and throat. For under 18s, staff can oversee the swab process.

Results, which take around half an hour from testing, will be shared directly with staff and students participating. Where participants are under 16, parents or legal guardians will be informed by telephone. We know 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). The tests have lower sensitivity but they are better at picking up cases when a person has higher viral load, hence the need to test frequently.

Testing will be offered free of charge.

If your child has had a positive test in the last 6 weeks, they should not take a further test as it may give a 'false positive' because of a previous infection. Please can you indicate this on your form.



Headteacher Mr Ahson Mohammed, B.Ed. (Hons)

Deputy Headteachers: Mrs Shirley Smears, B.Ed. (Hons), Mr Patrick Berry, BA (Hons), Mrs Charlotte Berry, BA (Hons)

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What if a person tests positive?

Participating staff and students who test positive will be informed about their results individually. Where participants are under 16, parents or legal guardians will be notified. Guidance on safe travel and additional precautions will be provided along with test results.

Students will need to take a 'PCR test' on the same day (or as soon as possible). This can be booked at www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test or by calling 119 to book a follow-up test. When ordering a PCR test, a drive-through test site should be booked if possible, as it is faster than requesting a home test.

During this time while they wait for the PCR result (via text / email) they 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.

What happens if the test is negative?

They will be able to return to / stay in school and resume their activities as normal. A student will only be told if they test positive on a 'lateral flow' test, 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.

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 and the test is 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 at 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 or visiting <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>.

We will support our staff and students throughout, but please contact us if you need further information or if you have any questions.

Yours sincerely



Mr A Mohammed, B.Ed.(Hons)
Headteacher