



8th February 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

This letter is about the consent form that parents and carers need to complete to give permission for the system of mass testing for COVID-19 in schools. Schools across the country are making preparations to run this testing when students return back onto school sites. This testing is for those people without coronavirus symptoms and uses new, quicker COVID-19 tests known as 'lateral flow tests'.

At Sydenham School we have been running lateral flow testing on-site for staff and the students who are attending our critical worker provision since the start of January. We've temporarily re-purposed our Sports Hall into a testing centre. At the moment, the uncertainty over the review of the lockdown means that it is difficult to plan fully for when we will roll out the mass testing across the student body as a whole. However, we are writing to parents and carers to get consent for the testing now, so that we are fully prepared to start testing when students return if this is still a requirement.

We would be grateful if you could complete the consent form found at [this link](#) as soon as possible to indicate your consent for this testing.

We ran a Teams Live Event on Tuesday 19th January to address the questions that parents and carers had about the testing. If you have remaining questions, please contact Ms Gostling at d.gostling@sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk.

How do the tests work?

These tests will work alongside the other protective measures that we have had in place at Sydenham School since September 2020. Up to one third of people who have coronavirus experience no symptoms. By testing, we hope that we will contribute to the national efforts to stop the spread of the virus and help to keep the staff and students on site at Sydenham School as safe as possible. The test is voluntary, but we strongly encourage everyone to participate to help keep our entire school community as safe as possible.

Those taking the test will be supervised by trained staff. Our staff have undertaken the NHS Test and Trace training and also completed training run by Public Health England at a local school that has been part of a pilot of mass testing. The 'lateral flow' tests are quick and easy using a swab of the nose and throat. For under 18s, staff will oversee the swab process.

Results take around half an hour from testing. You and your child will only be told if a test result is positive on a 'lateral flow' test. If you do not hear from us about a positive result, you can assume that the result was negative. A small number of students may need to repeat the test if the first test was invalid or void for some reason.

An instructional leaflet from the Department for Education, which includes some more information about the tests, can be found at this [link](#).



For further information about the use of your child's data, and questions about data protection, please see the following links to our website:

- [Privacy Notice](#)
- [Data Protection FAQs](#).

When will the tests take place?

It is very difficult to give full information about when the testing will take place as we currently do not have a definite date for the return of students to the school site. When we know more, we will write to you directly about the schedule for testing.

Registration and Consent for the Testing

If your child is aged 11-15, please fill in the registration and consent form found at this [link](#). If you have more than one child at Sydenham School who is in this age group, please complete a separate form for each child.

If your child is over 16, they are able to consent to their own medical treatment without parent/carer consent. We will seek consent from students before the test is conducted and email all students with the details and the link. Please discuss this with your child and check that they have completed the consent form found at this [link](#).

If you have already given consent because your child is attending our on-site provision during lockdown, you do not need to complete the form again.

What if my child tests positive?

If your child tests positive, we will inform them about their results individually. If your child is under 18, we will also notify you. To help limit the spread of infection, any child who tests positive will have to leave the school site immediately. **It is therefore essential that we have your most up to date contact details, including the details of someone we can contact during the school day. Please note, if we are unable to reach a parent or carer, we will have to send a child who tests positive home without having spoken to the parent or carer prior to the child leaving the site.** 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). In most circumstances, we will be able to provide these PCR test kits to perform at home 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 yourselves, 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 will need to self-isolate.

If the PCR test returns a positive result you will also have to self-isolate and follow the guidance from NHS Test and Trace. You must inform the school of this positive test.

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-



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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 very much value your ongoing support with all of the protective measures that we have had to put in place since September 2020. Thank you, in advance, for discussing this important situation with your child and for understanding the need for us to make these plans for testing on our school site. Please do not hesitate to contact me via email if you have any further questions.

Yours faithfully

Deborah Gostling

Deputy Headteacher