



Wednesday, 7 July 2021

Dear Families

Re: Consent for Mass Testing – September 2021

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 in September 2021. 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 ran lateral flow testing during the 2021lockdown for all staff and students on site. In March, we then ran 4,500 tests for our returning students in Sports Hall that was temporarily repurposed into a testing centre. We were amazed at the resilient approach of our students, who engaged in the process with excellent self control.

We are writing to parents and carers of new students to get consent for the testing now, so that we are fully prepared to start testing in September.

We would be grateful if you could complete the consent form found at this [link](#) as soon as possible and before July 19th to indicate your consent for this testing.

If you have questions, please contact Ms Gostling at d.gostling@sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk.

How do the tests work?

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?

The government announcement on 6th July 2021 indicated that all students returning to secondary schools will carry out 2 lateral flow tests in September before then beginning home testing for the rest of the month. The first test will be the day before students return to school, and the return will be staggered slightly to accommodate this.

We will write to you with the timings of the first test before the start of the summer holiday. Students will conduct the second test during the day when term has fully begun.

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 completed the tests in the Spring Term at Sydenham, you do not need to complete the form again unless your consent has changed.

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' on the same day (or as soon as possible).

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-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>



SYDENHAM SCHOOL

Specialist Science and Mathematics School



High
Performance
Learning

Headteacher: Gloria Lowe, MA, NPQH
Dartmouth Road, London SE26 4RD
Tel: 020 8699 6731

Website: www.sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk
E-mail: info@sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk

We very much value the ongoing support of our parents and carers as they help us manage the ongoing response to Covid-19. 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