



Longton Hall Road, Longton, Stoke-on-Trent. ST3 2NJ

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Headteacher: Mr M Rayner BA(Hons) NPQH

7th January 2021

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

Dear Parents and carers

Firstly, we would like to thank you for your continued support during what continue to be such unprecedented times. Despite the national lockdown and subsequent school closure, we are delighted that your child is attending school and thank you for your continued support in working so closely with us to ensure that we can keep your child safe while maintaining a sense of consistency with their education.

As I explained in my letter before Christmas, testing for those without coronavirus symptoms is beginning across the country in secondary schools 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.**

We will be testing all staff and students who are currently in school at this time and who want to participate from week commencing 11th January.

I enclose an instructional leaflet (consent form) containing more information.

If you are happy for your child to be tested, please follow the instructions on the enclosed consent form. Any student who is over the age of 16 can self-consent but I would encourage you to discuss these tests together.

You will need to access your Parent Pay account to give consent. For safeguarding reasons, we cannot accept emails or other forms of communication instead of the Parent Pay response as we know that only you have access to your Parent Pay account. No test will be conducted on your child if they are under 16 and we have not got your consent. Similarly, we will only conduct tests on those students who are over 16 with their written consent. Those taking the test will be supervised by trained staff

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.





What if a student 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 also be notified. 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). School 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 you wait for the PCR result (via text / email), you 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?

You will be able to stay in school and resume your 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/college 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 St Thomas More Catholic Academy 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 (England, Wales and Northern Ireland) or 0300 303 2713 (Scotland) or visiting <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>.





St Thomas More Catholic Academy

FAITH | EXCELLENCE | RESPECT



Archdiocese of
Birmingham

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We will support our staff and students throughout, but please contact us if you have any questions. You can call the office on 01782 882900 or email office@stmca.org.uk

Thanks for your continued support

Yours sincerely

Mr M Rayner
Headteacher



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