

30th December 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

We are working to keep our school 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 pupils 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 pupils who want to participate from week commencing 4 January 2021. I enclose an instructional leaflet with some more information.

If you are happy for your child to be tested, please complete the enclosed consent statement (one per pupil) and return it to the school via pupilservices@sweynepark.com at your earliest opportunity.

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 pupils participating. *Parents and carers will only be contacted if the test result is positive.*

In validation studies conducted by Oxford University and Public Health England, these tests are 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.

Consent and Registration

To confirm your consent and enable us to register your child please complete and return the enclosed Consent Form, by email, to pupilservices@sweynepark.com.

What if a pupil tests positive?

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

Pupils 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, by going to www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test or calling 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 your child is waiting for the PCR result, (sent 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?

Your child will be able to stay in school and resume their classes as normal. A pupil 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 pupils 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 have consented to being tested once a day for 7 school-days and the test is negative. If they do not take the test, they will need to self-isolate as per the national guidelines.

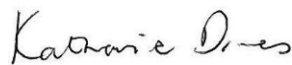
What if my child develops symptoms?

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 do hope that this testing programme will be successful and enable our pupils to remain in school where at all possible.

Thank you in advance for your support.

Kind regards,



Katharine Dines
Headteacher

