



8th January 2021

NHS Test and Trace: COVID-19 testing for Staff and Students

Dear Parent / Guardian,

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 devices'. This letter is to help give you more information about the testing programme at St Mary's College.

Up to one third of people who have coronavirus are asymptomatic. By testing we will help to reduce the spread in school and college settings through asymptomatic transmission. I am therefore strongly encouraging those returning to St Mary's College to be tested.

Plan for testing

We will be testing all staff and secondary school and college age students as they return to the premises, with priority given to exam year groups and those who are in school under the critical workers and vulnerable students categories.

In addition, any staff member or student who has come into contact with positive cases at St Mary's College can be tested daily for seven days to allow them to remain in school.

How the tests work

Those taking the test will be supervised by trained staff and volunteers. The lateral flow tests are quick and easy to undertake, using a swab of the nose and throat. Results (which take around half an hour from testing) will be shared directly with the individual participant. The school will inform the student of a positive test result. Where participants are under 16, parents or legal guardians will also be informed. The student will also receive a text notification of a positive or negative result from the online NHS system. Tests are free of charge and I enclose further information about taking the test at the end of this letter.

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Mr G Fitzpatrick

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Mr D Perry



What if my child tests positive?

If a pupil tests positive on a lateral flow device, they will be informed immediately by school and will need to take a further 'PCR test' to confirm the result. This should be on the same day or as soon as possible afterwards. School will be able to provide these PCR test kits to perform at home.

During the time while waiting for the PCR result via text/email they will need to self-isolate.

If the PCR test returns a positive result they will have to continue to self-isolate and follow the guidance from NHS Test and Trace.

What happens if the test is negative?

While a small number of pupils may need to repeat the test if the first test was invalid or void for some reason, pupils who test negative will be able to stay in school and resume their activities as normal. Pupils will be informed of negative test results via text/email. Where participants are under 16, parents or legal guardians will also be informed.

What if staff or students have been in close contact with someone in school who tests positive?

The staff member or student will be notified that they are a close contact by St Mary's College. If close contacts agree to be tested each day for a maximum period of 7 days, and they test negative every day, they will be allowed to remain in school. There may be instances where close contacts are also contacted by NHS Test and Trace. In this instance they should notify NHS Test and Trace that they are a close contact through school and are participating in daily contact testing.

What if my child develops symptoms?

This testing programme at St Mary's College is for people with no symptoms. If your child develops symptoms at any time (including 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 pupils throughout, but please contact us if you have any questions. You can contact the office on admin@smchull.org or tel 01482 851136.

Yours faithfully,

D. Perry

Mr D. Perry, Head of School

Take swab sample

Step-by-step guide

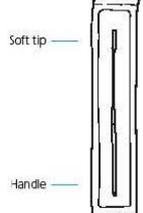
Need help?

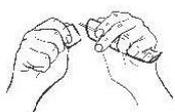
If you have any questions or problems with this test kit, please alert a member of staff.

1  Remove your face covering.
Look inside your mouth, and find your tonsils at the back of the throat. You can use the mirror to help. Your tonsils or where they would have been (if they are removed) are where you will swab your sample.

2  **Gently blow your nose into a tissue**
Throw the used tissue into the clinical waste bin provided. This is so that you get rid of excess mucus.

3  **Use hand sanitiser to clean your hands.**
This is so that you do not contaminate the test kit.

4  **Check if there is a swab in a sealed pack in front of you.**
Identify the soft, fabric tip of the swab.

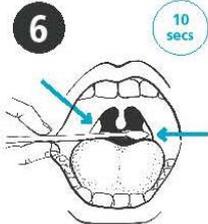
5  **Open the package and gently take out the swab.**
This will be used for both throat and nose.

Do not touch your tongue, teeth, cheeks, gums, or any other surfaces with the fabric tip of the swab.

The swab is invalid if it touches these parts, and you will need to get a new swab. If this happens ask a member of staff to get assistance.

The swabbing may feel uncomfortable. Do not insert the swab any deeper if you feel strong resistance or pain.

If there is blood or vomit on the swab sample, please alert a member of staff.

6  **10 secs**
Holding the swab in your hand, open your mouth wide and rub the fabric tip of the swab over both tonsils (or where they would have been) at the back of the throat with good contact **at least 3 times** (use a mirror to help you do this). Carefully remove the swab stick from the back of your throat.

7  **10-15 secs**
Put the same end of the same swab gently into one nostril until you feel a slight resistance (about 2.5cm or 1 inch up your nose). Roll the **swab 5 times** along the the inside of the nostril.

After collecting the sample hold the swab upright in your hand, do not put it down and notify one of the Testing assistants.

Be careful not to touch any surfaces with the swab. Put on your face covering.

Follow the instructions from a member of staff on what to do next.

Use hand sanitiser after handing in your sample.