

25 February 2021

## **COVID-19 Lateral Flow Device Testing Programme for Students**

Dear Parent and Carers

As you are aware, schools are permitted to re-open to all students from Monday 8 March. You may also be aware that in order to resume education, and to support with breaking any community transmission of COVID-19, the government would like schools to offer students three COVID-19 tests, before then offering a programme of testing at home.

As you may imagine, this will be a significant logistical challenge for the College with potentially 3540 tests to carry out over the period of a fortnight. However, we are determined to try to find a solution to this as so that we can welcome our students back as quickly as possible.

Whilst we are not yet in a position to confirm the arrangements for the testing, nor what the process and specific dates will be for each individual student to return, we are able to outline what the testing process will be and seek to gain your consent for your child, or their consent if they are over 16, for them to participate in the testing programme.

### **Why is a testing programme being offered?**

Up to one third of people who have coronavirus are asymptomatic, which means that because they do not show any of the COVID-19 symptoms, they are probably unaware that they have the virus. Therefore, they may be spreading it without realising.

By testing, we will help to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in school settings through asymptomatic transmission and in turn help to minimise any community outbreaks. All of this will contribute to both schools remaining open and a swift return to 'normality' for us all.

We would therefore strongly encourage our students to undertake a testing programme, using Lateral Flow Device (LFD) tests.

### **How do Lateral Flow Device (LFD) tests work?**

The LFD tests are quick and easy to undertake, using a swab of the nose and throat. Results are then produced in around half an hour from testing.

### **What will the onsite testing process look like?**

Initially, students are being offered three supervised LFD tests, carried out on the College site under the supervision of trained adults and volunteers. This is known as ATS, assisted test site testing. Each of these tests will be 3-5 days apart, with each individual student's test dates to be confirmed once the College has planned the schedule.

Once the student's test has been processed, the College will notify the student and their parents and carers if the result is positive. The student will also receive a text/email notification of a positive or negative result from the online NHS system.

Students will have their first test by year group, carried out over a series of days during week commencing 8 March. This first round of testing will take some time to administer as we will be required to ensure a strict regime of social distancing, given that students have been isolating as part of the national lockdown. Following a negative result, students would then commence their onsite learning.

Students would then have their second and third LFD test in the subsequent days, coming out of a lesson in order to undertake their test.

The purpose of offering students onsite assisted testing initially is, firstly, to identify any student who may be asymptomatic as the College re-opens in order to prevent them from unknowingly spreading the virus. In addition to this, it is to 'train' students in how to administer the tests so that, following their third onsite assisted test, they can then be issued with home testing kits.

### **How will home testing work?**

Following their third test in College, students will be issued with a pack of LFD home testing kits, which they will be asked to sign for. Testing should then be undertaken twice per week at home, ideally in the morning. Students can self-swab, apart from those who are 11 years old, where it is recommended that an adult carries out the swabbing.

The full testing process will take around 30 minutes to undertake but the swabbing itself can be undertaken in a few minutes.

A simple, step by step video on how to administer a home test can also be viewed on YouTube [here](#).

Every time your child uses a lateral flow test at home the results must be reported to the NHS. More details can be found here: [Report a COVID-19 test result](#). The results will also have to be reported to the College and more details will follow on how to do this.

Tests are free of charge and we enclose a leaflet with further information.

### **What if my child tests positive?**

If a student tests positive using a LFD, they will need to self-isolate for 10 days and follow the guidance from NHS Test and Trace.

### **What happens if the test is negative?**

While a small number of students may need to repeat the test if the first test was invalid or void for some reason, students who test negative will be able to attend school as normal. We will outline our plans for this shortly. Students will be informed of negative test results via text/email. Where students are under 16, parents or carers will also be informed.

### **What if a student has been in close contact with someone in the College who tests positive?**

The student and their parents and carers will be notified by the College that they are a close contact and will need to self-isolate for 10 days in line with Government guidance.

### **What if my child develops COVID-19 symptoms?**

This testing programme 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>.

### **What are the next steps?**

In order for us to offer onsite assisted LFD tests, **we must have a completed consent form.** This can be accessed by clicking this [link](#).

We also include a privacy notice for both the onsite assisted testing and the home testing.

Please note that students over the age of 16 should complete the consent form themselves, with those under 18 having discussed the process with parents and carers first. Those over 18 should complete the consent form themselves.

Please also note that any student who has tested positive for COVID-19 within the last 90 days should not take a test at this time. We will liaise directly with those who indicate that they fall into this category to confirm when their testing process should commence.

As we have significant planning to do, it is important that we gain some understanding of how many tests we have to administer. Therefore, we ask that the consent form is completed **by 3.00pm on Monday 1 March** at the latest.

We ask that you complete the consent form, even if you do not wish to give consent (for which there is a box on the form to indicate this). In this way, we will not have to keep chasing you for a reply!

***Testing is voluntary, but we do urge parents and carers to allow their child to engage with this process, which, once the students have been trained, is quick and easy to administer.***

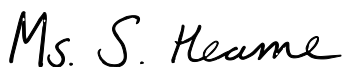
***Those students who do not participate in the testing programme will return to school at the same time as the rest of their year group.***

### **And finally...**

We will support our students throughout, but please do contact the College via [mail@latimer.org.uk](mailto:mail@latimer.org.uk) if you have any questions. Please use 'Lateral Flow Device Testing' in the subject heading so that we can direct your enquiry to the relevant member of our testing team.

We very much look forward to welcoming your child back to school soon.

Yours sincerely



**Ms Siobhan Hearne  
Principal**