

5<sup>th</sup> March 2021

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

Dear parents and carers

We are working hard to keep Launceston College 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' (LFT).

Along with the other protective measures we are already taking, these tests will help staff and students to remain in college safely. Up to one third of people who have coronavirus experience no symptoms. By testing regularly, we will help to stop the virus spread and help to keep our college open as safely as possible. The test is voluntary, but we have been advised by the government and public health England to strongly encourage everyone to take it.

We have been testing staff and students who have been on site and wanted to participate from the week commencing 5<sup>th</sup> January 2021.

Please find an instructional leaflet attached with some information on how to do your test. This letter, the consent form and further information, including privacy notices, can be found in the COVID section of the College website at <http://www.launceston-college.cornwall.sch.uk/covid-19/>

If you are happy for your child to be tested, please complete the attached consent form and return it to [covidconsent@launcestoncollege.org.uk](mailto:covidconsent@launcestoncollege.org.uk)

Those taking the test will be supervised by trained staff. The LFT's are quick and easy using a swab of your nose and throat. For under 18s, staff can oversee the swab process. Results take around half an hour to process following testing; information on what happened following a positive or negative result follows below.

Scientific research indicates that LFT's 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 of course be offered free of charge.

### **What if a member of staff or 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 by the College.

From the 8<sup>th</sup> March, testing will take place on site for the first three tests. If staff and students received a positive LFT result they will need to go home and self-isolate for 10 days.

Once testing moves to home testing, if you receive a positive LFT result then you will need to take a 'PCR test' (similar to those done in local and regional testing sites) on the same day (or as soon as possible). You will need to go to [www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test](http://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test) or call 119 to book a test. If ordering a PCR test, you should choose to visit a drive-through test site if possible, as it is faster than requesting a home test.

If the PCR test returns a positive result you will have to self-isolate and follow the guidance from NHS Test and Trace. If the PCR test returns a negative result you can continue to attend college and resume regular LFT's.

### **What happens if the LFT result is negative?**

Staff and students will be able to stay in College and resume their 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 people 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 college who has tested positive for COVID-19 will need to self-isolate for 10 days before being able to return to college. This does not apply to household members or close contacts outside of college. If the close contact then develops symptoms, they must take PCR test and the whole household isolates until a negative result is received. If the result is positive the household must isolate with the positive person for 10 days.

### **What if my child develops symptoms?**

This testing programme at college 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>.

We will support our staff and students throughout. If you have any further questions about testing please contact Mark Adams, Assistant Principal [stfjma@launcestoncollege.org.uk](mailto:stfjma@launcestoncollege.org.uk)

Yours sincerely,



Jenn Burn

Principal