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Dear Parent/Carer

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

This letter is to inform you about the coronavirus testing in schools and to request consent for your son or daughter if you wish for them to be included

You may have heard that testing for those without coronavirus symptoms is beginning across the country using new, quicker COVID19 tests known as 'lateral flow devices.' This letter is to help give you more information about the testing programme at Bedale High School. Lynn Riley-Fox is overseeing the delivery and administration of these tests in school, with support from me.

Up to one third of people who have coronavirus are asymptomatic. By testing, the Government believes we will help to reduce the spread in school and college settings through asymptomatic transmission.

How the tests work

Students taking the test will be supervised by Bedale High School employees who have completed the NHS Test and Trace training for this testing programme and supported by volunteers who will be supervised by BHS staff. Our volunteers have also completed the NHS Test and Trace training. The lateral flow test requires taking a swab from the throat and nose in preparation for the test to be analysed. We will know the results within 20 – 30 minutes. If a positive result has been identified we will inform the participant immediately, all negative results will not be relayed to the participants.

Where participants are under 16, parents or legal guardians will also be informed of a positive result. The student (or the mobile phone number on the consent form) will also receive a text/email notification of a positive or negative result from the online NHS system. Tests are free of charge.

We recognise that the self-swabbing part of the test may cause significant concerns for some children and young people with SEND and their families. Some of these concerns may be alleviated by discussing them with school and agreeing strategies to help reduce anxiety and putting in place any reasonable adjustments (if the individual has a disability). Parents and carers may want to look at the Mass Testing Guidance for Specialist Settings for further information and then email Alison Knight and Lynn Riley-Fox with any queries.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-full-opening-special-schools-and-other-specialist-settings/mass-asymptomatic-testing-in-specialist-settings>

Plan for testing

Initially we will be looking to offer the test to staff on a weekly basis. As we scale up our capacity we expect to also test all of the students currently in school (whose parents have given consent). This happens twice, three to five days apart, as a one-off test. Schools have now been asked to hold off on the serial 7 day testing for students who are identified as a close contact of a positive case, so we await further developments on that aspect. A decision is also yet to be made as to whether the testing provision will be extended to all students, as a one-off test (two tests, three to five days apart) at the point at which they return to school.

What if my child tests positive?

If a student tests positive on a lateral flow device, they 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. BHS will provide these PCR test kits to perform at home. We will also follow our isolation procedure and require that the student is picked up, as soon as possible, and taken home.

During the time while waiting for the PCR result (via text/email) the student 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 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 stay in school and resume their activities as normal.

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

As previously stated, the DFE have this week asked schools to hold back on the previous proposal to daily test contacts of positive cases. Therefore, we will be following the existing self-isolation guidance in this instance, and the student/staff who is a contact of the positive case will remain at home to self-isolate.

What if my child develops symptoms?

This testing programme at BHS is ONLY 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>.

CONSENT:

For this to happen we need your consent. If you want your son or daughter to be involved in this testing provision, please complete the form in the link below. Please also review the privacy notice attached to this letter. There is no pressure from school to participate in this testing – it is a personal decision for each family to take and we completely respect and support your choices, whatever you decide.

LINK TO FORM:

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id= On9DmhCgUW61gOqI5ebFvOgcRQQcVxK uolqfxltJdJUQ1ZKSUEwQ0pUTVBJT1ZCRDVJQkZKTTBLUC4u>

LINK TO 'How to take a Coronavirus test' video. This video shows what happens with the swabbing process...please watch it with your child so that you both know what to expect:

[How to take a coronavirus self-test swab - YouTube](#)

We will, as always, aim to support our staff and students throughout, but please contact us if you have any questions.

Yours faithfully



Tom Kelly



Lynn Riley-Fox