

**School re-opening in January 2021**  
**NHS Test and Trace: COVID-19 testing for staff and pupils**

Dear Parent/Carer,

I hope that you and your family had an enjoyable Christmas, notwithstanding the COVID-19 restrictions that we are all living with.

As you know, we have worked incredibly hard since the start of the pandemic in March to keep our school as safe as possible, and that work has continued over the Christmas holiday period. I would like to thank our incredible staff for their commitment and professionalism, which has seen many working over the holidays.

My letter today includes important information relating to when your child will return to school at the start of this coming term, and relating to the COVID-19 testing process for staff and students.

**Information relating to school re-opening in January 2021**

The Government has now announced that secondary schools and colleges will re-open on a phased basis, as follows:

- If your child is classed as vulnerable or if you or your partner is a key worker, then your child can return to school on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> January. They will receive on site provision on their return involving accessing the remote teaching set for all students. Click [here](#) to access our critical and vulnerable on site provision request form. The deadline for completion of this form is 6pm on the 3<sup>rd</sup> January.
- If your child is taking exams this academic year (which includes all those in Year 11 and Year 13), then your child will return to school on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> January. Your child is expected to engage fully with their remote learning during the week of 4<sup>th</sup> January so that they keep up with their education. Depending on transport arrangements, it is possible that we will invite your child to attend school to be tested ahead of the date of their return to the academy. We will be in touch about this if this is the case.
- If your child is in Years 7, 8, 9, 10 or 12 but is not taking any exams this academic year, then your child will return to school on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> January. Your child is expected to engage fully with their remote learning during the weeks of both 4<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> January so that they keep up with their education.
- Please note, if your child is taking a BTEC external exam on the week of the 4<sup>th</sup> January, this exam will still take place and your child will need to attend the academy for the time of their exam.
- Please note, Year 10 parents' evening will continue as a planned virtual event on 7<sup>th</sup> January.
- Please note, although staff will endeavour to deliver live lessons, live delivery of teaching will not be mandatory due to the testing requirements in school. Students should continue to check Satchel One (Show My Homework) and their emails to see whether their teacher is able to deliver a live lesson or has set remote work.

As before, a great deal of planning and risk assessment has gone into ensuring that our school continues to be as safe as possible for pupils and staff, in line with latest Government and Public Health England guidance.

We will continue to take decisions in the best interests of our pupils, working with you and keeping you informed every step of the way, while following Government rules and advice.

### **Information relating to NHS Test and Trace: COVID-19 testing for staff and pupils**

You may have heard that testing for those without coronavirus symptoms is beginning across the country using COVID-19 tests known as 'lateral flow tests'.

Along with the other protective measures we are taking, these tests can help staff and pupils 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. However, we are participating as a school and I would encourage all pupils and staff to take part as well.

We will be testing all staff and pupils who want to participate from the week commencing 4<sup>th</sup> January 2021, extending this as more pupils return in following weeks.

I link here an [instructional leaflet](#) with some more information as well as the [consent form \(click here\)](#). At the bottom of this letter, I also provide a second page of information responding to frequently asked questions.

Please fill in the form using the above link whether you are choosing to give consent or not to enable us to know your position on testing (one per pupil).

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 take around half an hour from testing and will be shared directly with staff and pupils participating. Where participants are under-16, parents or legal guardians will also be informed.

The Government has shared information with us from Oxford University and Public Health England, which have indicated the tests are as accurate in identifying a case as a 'PCR test' (99.68% specificity). The tests have lower sensitivity but are considered better at picking up cases when a person has higher viral load, hence the need to test frequently. Testing will be offered free of charge.

I hope that the information in this letter is helpful and clear. Please do ensure you complete the consent form attached, regardless of whether you give consent or not, by 5<sup>th</sup> January 2021. If you have any questions, please do also email these to [info@cowesec.org](mailto:info@cowesec.org).

In the meantime, I would like to take this opportunity to wish you and your family a very happy New Year. Please do continue to take care and stay safe.

Yours sincerely,



Rachel Kitley

Principal

Cowes Enterprise College

## Further information regarding testing

### What if a pupil tests positive?

Participating staff and pupils who test positive will be informed about their results individually. Where participants are under 16, parents or legal guardians 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). You can go to [www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test](https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test) or can call 119 to book a follow-up test. If ordering a PCR test yourselves, choose to visit a drive-through test site if possible, as it is faster than requesting a home test.

During the time while they wait for the PCR result (via text/email), the students will need to self-isolate.

If the PCR test confirms 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?

They will be able to stay in school and resume their activities 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/college who has tested positive for COVID-19 will be able to return to school if they agree to be tested once a day for seven days and the test is negative. If they do not want to take the test, they will need to self-isolate as per the national guidelines. This does not apply to household members or close contacts outside school who will still need to self-isolate. Further details will be provided at the time, but if you would prefer to self-isolate instead of doing daily testing, you can.

### 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 will support our staff and pupils throughout, but please contact us if you need this information in any other language or format or if you have any questions at [info@cowesec.org](mailto:info@cowesec.org).