

7<sup>th</sup> January 2021

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**Important Note – students who are showing any symptoms relating to COVID-19 must NOT come into college for testing. Symptomatic students must follow the guidance on 119 and book for a drive through test.**

Dear Parent/Carer

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

The Government has requested that, as part of the keyworker provision of supporting students in college, we continue with plans to test students who come into school. This letter sets out the rationale behind testing and the information you will need in order to provide informed consent for your child to be tested.

We will initially be testing those students attending school who are deemed vulnerable, those who are the children of key workers and those staff working in the school over the coming days. We are not, at this stage, calling all students in to be tested. Should this situation change we will be in better position to offer testing to a wider range of students.

The school-based **asymptomatic** testing (testing for those without Coronavirus symptoms) uses a new, quicker COVID-19 tests known as 'lateral flow tests' (LFT). The government would like as many secondary and college age students and staff to take two tests upon their return to school as possible.

You are aware that we have introduced many protective measures since September such as the 'zoning' of year groups in specific areas of the school, the wearing of face coverings on the school site, and careful hygiene and cleaning routines. Last term, we thankfully had comparatively few confirmed cases of Coronavirus among students and staff, with limited disruption. However, it is very difficult to know how many children and adults carry Coronavirus without symptoms (asymptomatic carriers); these lateral flow tests (LFT) will help us identify those asymptomatic carriers, reducing the risk of further transmission and potentially limiting the time students and staff need to spend in isolation when they come into potential contact with Covid-19.

While taking a LFT test in school will be voluntary, I would encourage everyone to participate. These tests are primarily about the confidence we can have that we are doing everything possible to prevent the transmission of this virus to the most vulnerable in our region. The LFT tests are certainly not perfect but I believe that they enhance our risk assessment provision and may limit the disruption to teaching that a confirmed case can mean. In validation studies conducted by Oxford University and Public Health England, the LFT were shown to be as accurate in identifying a case as a PCR test (99.68% specificity).

Commencing this week (4<sup>th</sup> January) we will be testing all consenting staff and secondary aged students who are attending college via our vulnerable and keyworker provision. Several thousand test kits and PPE equipment were delivered this week, and staff have already undertaken the

required training. The reduction in student numbers attending college now means that we can test students weekly, if consent is given.

We have uploaded a number of additional resources together with the data handling Privacy Notice and a frequently asked questions sheet to the CMAT Coronavirus (Covid-19) web page on the CMAT website which can be found [here](#).

Students will be supervised by trained staff in administering the test themselves. It is important to note that staff will not be physically swabbing the children. The staff will be a combination of existing college staff who have successfully completed all the online training modules and have been certified as meeting a competency checklist.

Please fill the [form in here to give or deny consent](#) for your child (one per student) and press submit. Students over the age of 16 can complete the form themselves once they have discussed their decision with their parent or legal guardian.

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

#### **What if a 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. Guidance on safe travel and additional precautions will be provided along with test results.

Students will need to take a further 'PCR test' (like those done in local and regional testing sites) on the same day, or as soon as possible. We will be able to provide these PCR test kits to perform at home or you can go to [www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test](http://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test) or call 119 to book a follow-up test. If ordering a PCR test yourselves, you should choose to visit a drive-through test site if possible, as it is faster than requesting a home test.

During this time while the student waits for the PCR result (via text/email) they will need to self-isolate.

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

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

The student 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 students 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 be able to remain in college if they agree to be tested once a day for 7 days and the daily test is negative. If the student does 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 of college who will still need to self-isolate.

Further details will be provided at the time, but if the student would prefer to self-isolate instead of doing daily testing, they can.



### What if my child develops symptoms?

This testing programme 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>.

**It is important that symptomatic students do not come into college for a test.**

If you have further questions or concerns please contact us on the [COVID19@elycollege.co.uk](mailto:COVID19@elycollege.co.uk) email address.

Yours faithfully

Simon Warburton  
Principal