



The Priory School

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4th January 2021

NHS Test and Trace: COVID-19 testing for staff and [students/pupils]

Dear Parent or carer,

We are working to keep The Priory School 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'.

Along with the other protective measures we are taking, these tests will help staff and students to remain in school/college 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 The Priory School open as safely as possible. The test is voluntary, and there will be no pressure from school for students to participate but it will be more successful if the majority take part.

We will be testing all staff and students who want to participate from the start of term. This may not be immediately as we still have to implement training and set up a test set which matches requirements as well as put together a rota for staffing which ensures year groups are tested separately. Although there has been much government publicity about support given to schools this tends to be online rather than in the form of personnel on the ground, and there is nothing which I feel is reliable or confirmed in terms of extra funding available for this. I am currently relying on staff coming forward, in their free time, within a voluntary capacity.

I enclose an instructional leaflet with some more information.

If you are happy for your child to be tested, please complete the form and consent statement (one per pupil/student) on the following link

https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=X4pRTR73X0uDdSbvXs_1sVWWYnYYaRxNmtIquN-avAJUN0tOSzhOUU5BOUFKTDhYWkEzOEhXTIRBVS4u

Trained staff will supervise those taking the test. 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, with students performing the swabbing themselves.

Results (which take around half an hour from testing), will be shared directly with staff and students participating. We will only be informing parents if students test positive as we do not have the capacity to inform parents every time there is a negative test. If parents do not hear from us, they should speak to their child but also assume their child's test was negative.

What if a pupil tests positive?

We will inform participating staff and pupils who test positive 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. We will be able to provide these PCR test kits to perform at home but only for those families who cannot travel to a test site for specific reasons or you can go to www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test or call 119 to book a follow-up test. If ordering a PCR test yourselves, they should choose to visit a drive-through test site if possible, as it is faster than requesting a home test. We will not be carrying out these further PCR tests on site unless in extreme circumstances. When contacted by school a family member must be available to collect their child as soon as possible. We will keep your child(ren) isolated and supervised until you can collect and take them for the PCR test.

During this time while they wait for the PCR result (via text / email) they will need to self-isolate. If the PCR test returns 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/college 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 7 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 of 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 (England, Wales and Northern Ireland) 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. You can call the office on 01743 284000 or email info@tpstrust.co.uk.

General advice

We are extremely proud of the fact we were able to maintain continuity for our students throughout the autumn term. This is due to students and staff adhering to high levels of personal hygiene, wearing face-masks and social distancing. By providing this level of testing it should not and will not replace this. It can give a false sense of complacency. We will continue to reinforce compliance in school, please support us with this more important message at home. Please **DO NOT** send your child(ren) into school if they have any symptoms. They should self-isolate as before.

We need to ensure the safety of all in light of the new Covid strains Face-masks **MUST** be worn by students to keep my staff safe. A small number of students are medically exempt and we will not be challenging them as staff know who they are. Simply disagreeing with the wearing of masks is not a reason for a student coming to school without one. We will be applying school sanctions for those who persistently turn up to school without one or who are deliberately not wearing one in communal areas.

As always thank you for your words of kindness, we are very fortunate to have such a supportive parental body behind us and I look forward to thanking you all in person just as soon as we can.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "A. Pope". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'A' and a smaller 'Pope'.

Mrs A Pope
Headteacher