

Dear Parent / Carers

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

You may have heard that testing for those without coronavirus symptoms is happening across the country using new, quicker COVID-19 tests known as 'lateral flow devices'. This letter is to help give you more information about the testing programme in our secondary schools at The Apollo Partnership Trust.

Up to one third of people who have coronavirus are asymptomatic. By testing we will help to reduce the spread in school and college settings through asymptomatic transmission. I am therefore strongly encouraging all students returning to The Newbridge School and/or The Castle Rock School to be tested.

Plan for testing:

We will be looking to test all secondary school students before they resume their lessons in school.

As student numbers are high, we aim to put into place a staggered return. More details on this will follow from the Head of School.

How the tests work:

Government guidance recommends that students are tested three times a week at school, then following that twice a week at home. Those taking the test in school will be supervised by trained staff and volunteers. The lateral flow tests are quick and easy to undertake, using a swab of the nose and throat. Results (which take around half an hour from testing) will be shared directly with the individual participant.

The school will inform the student of a positive test result. Parents or legal guardians will also be informed. For students under the age of 16 years and in Key Stages 3 or 4, the parent / legal guardian will also receive a text/email notification of a positive or negative result from the online NHS system. Student over the age of 16 years and in Key Stage 5 will receive the text/email notification of a positive or negative result from the online NHS system. Tests are free of charge.

What if my child tests positive?

If a student tests positive on a lateral flow device, they will be informed immediately by their school and 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. Their school will be able to provide these PCR test kits to perform at home.

During the time while waiting for the PCR result (via text/email) they 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 resume their activities as normal, as directed by the school.

Where participants are under 16 years and in Key Stage 3 or 4, parents or legal guardians will be informed of negative test results via text/email. Students over the age of 16 years and in Key Stage 5, will be informed of negative test results via text/email.

The text/emails are generated by online NHS system.

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

Staff members or students will be notified by the school if they are a close contact, in which case they must follow the government guidelines. There may be instances where close contacts are also contacted by NHS Test and Trace. In this instance they should notify NHS Test and Trace that they are a close contact through school and are participating in daily (school day) contact testing.

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 (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>.

What happens next?

Please log in to the 'Arbor Parental Portal'. You will see on the left hand side of the screen 'Notices'. You will then be guided to accept or decline your consent. Please be aware that students must be tested before they can resume their lessons in school, unless you decline your consent.

Could we please ask that your consent is recorded before Tuesday 2nd March at 5.00pm.

We will support our staff and students throughout, but please contact us if you have any questions. You can contact the COVID-19 Lateral Flow Testing Co-Ordinator at the relevant school:

- The Newbridge School – Mrs Thornton by emailing cv19testing@newbridgesch.uk and
- The Castle Rock School – Mrs Evans by emailing cv19testing@castlerocksch.uk.

In order to stop the spread of the virus, the key factors are 'Hands, Face, Space' and then regular testing with vaccination as soon as possible. I feel it our civic responsibility to carry out the tests to help protect our students, our staff and our local community.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours faithfully



Duncan Baldwin
Head of The Castle Rock School