

1<sup>st</sup> March 2021

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

Dear Parent/Carer,

We hope this letter finds you well. As you know we are working to keep the UTC as safe as possible. As promised we have further information regarding the mass testing for Covid-19 that the government is asking us to support. This is also known as a lateral flow test.

Along with the other protective measures we are taking, these tests will help staff and students to remain at the UTC 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 UTC open as safely as possible. The test is voluntary, but I would urge everyone to take it.

We will be testing all staff and students who want to participate from when they come back into the UTC.

If you are happy for your child to be tested, please fill in the consent form via our website - the link of which can be found [HERE](#). By submitting this electronic form you are giving your consent for your son/daughter to be tested for Covid-19.

If you do not have access to the form or have any difficulties, it can also be completed by downloading the form from our website [HERE](#) and emailing it back to [office@utcsouthdurham.org](mailto:office@utcsouthdurham.org)

We would very much appreciate it if you could submit/return your consent by Friday 29<sup>th</sup> January 2021 to allow us to begin testing as soon as possible upon students return.

Please note that additional information regarding privacy notices and frequently asked questions and answers can also be found on our website [HERE](#)

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 will oversee the swab process. More about how students take their swab is also attached.

Results (which take around half an hour from testing) will be shared directly with staff and pupils participating. Where participants are under 16, parents or legal guardians will only be informed if the test is positive. More information about the next steps in this case can be found below.

The government have advised us that they know these tests work - in validation studies conducted by Oxford University and Public Health England, they were shown to be as accurate in identifying a case as a PCR test (a clinical test) (99.68% specificity). The tests have lower sensitivity but they are better at picking up cases when a person has higher viral load, hence the need to test frequently.

Testing will be conducted three times from the date the student comes back to the UTC until Friday 18<sup>th</sup> March. Tests thereafter will then be sent home for students to complete.

Rather than each student having to register for a test and trace account when undertaking these tests in school we will be uploading the data in bulk to the government portal. This will save a huge amount of time for the students in the testing process. Please note we will use the telephone number of you as a parent to send the outcome of the test.

### **What if a pupil tests positive?**

Participating staff and pupils who test positive will be informed about their results individual via parents or legal guardians. Guidance on safe travel and additional precautions will be provided along with test results.

If the Lateral Flow Test comes back as positive then the student will be asked to self-isolate for the 10 days as per government guidance. Parents/Guardians will be informed via our usual processes.

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

They will be able to stay at the UTC 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 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 the school/6<sup>th</sup> Form who has tested positive for COVID-19 will be identified and asked to self-isolate for the 10 days as per the government guidance.

### **What if my child develops symptoms?**

This testing programme at the UTC 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 booking a test at <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>.

Please contact us if you have any further questions by emailing [office@utcsouthdurham.org](mailto:office@utcsouthdurham.org) or calling 01325 430250.

Kind Regards,

Tom

Tom Dower

Principal