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NHS TEST AND TRACE: COVID-19 TESTING FOR STAFF AND STUDENTS

Dear Parent / Carer

We are working to keep Heston Community School as safe as possible. You will have heard that testing for those without coronavirus symptoms is beginning across the country using the new, quicker COVID-19 tests known as Lateral Flow Tests.

Along with the other protective measures, these tests will help staff and students to 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 spreading and help to keep our School as safe as possible. The test is voluntary, but I would strongly encourage everyone to take it.

We will be testing all staff and students within Years 11, 12 and 13 who want to participate from the week commencing 04 January 2021.

Further information of the Lateral Flow Tests can be found on the School's website.

If you are happy for your child to be tested, please complete the Registration and Consent Form attached [one per student] and return it to the School with your child.

Those taking the test will be supervised by trained staff. The Lateral Flow Tests are quick and easy to administer using a swab of your nose and throat. Trained staff will oversee the testing process.

Only positive results will be communicated directly with the person concerned. Where participants are students, parents/carers will also be informed.

We 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 [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 offered free of charge.

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 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 [similar to those done in local and regional testing sites] on the same day or as soon as possible. Please contact www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test or call 119 to book a follow-up test. Should you need a PCR test, it is advisable to visit a drive-through test site, if possible, as this is faster than requesting a home test.

 **Specialist Visual Arts Academy**

While waiting for the test result, you 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?

You will be able to stay in School and continue with activities as normal. You will only be told if you have tested positive on a Lateral Flow Test, so if you do not hear from the School, you can assume that the test result was negative. A small number of students may need to repeat the test if the first test was invalid or void.

What if a close contact at School tests positive?

A close contact of someone in School 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 0300 303 2713 (Scotland) or visiting <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>.

We will support our staff and students 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 0208 572 1931 or email info@hestoncs.org.

Yours faithfully



M O'Hagan
Deputy Headteacher