

Our Ref: GAH/EMH

17 March 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

GOSFORTH ACADEMY HOME TESTING INFORMATION

Regular asymptomatic (no symptoms) COVID-19 testing has been in place at Gosforth Academy since February 2021.

The Government has recently announced that all secondary aged students will also be offered regular asymptomatic COVID-19 tests to take at home with LFD kits. All secondary aged students will be offered LFD tests to take at home twice a week, so that we can reduce the spread of the virus.

Up to one in three people who have COVID-19 can spread the virus without knowing. This is because they have no symptoms. To reduce the spread of the virus, we need to identify those individuals. We can do this within Gosforth Academy by carrying out tests at home twice every week.

Testing pupils/students at home

We understand that each child has individual needs. Many children will adapt to testing becoming part of their routine, others will find it more challenging. Taking part in testing is voluntary and all children will be able to attend Gosforth Academy whether they take part or not. We hope that the option to take the test in the morning **or** the evening will support families to test at home.

Students will collect tests kits from school. Tests are free of charge. Initially, students will receive testing kits with a leaflet on how to take the test and report the results. We require results to be recorded on the NHS Test & Trace self-report website and on the school FROG page.

The result of each test needs to be reported using the NHS Test & Trace self-report website: <https://www.gov.uk/report-covid19-result>.

To report the test result on the school FROG portal please follow the [link](#).

If your child has a positive test result, they will need to stay home and self-isolate. If the result of the test is unclear (void) they will need to do another test.

We suggest that students conduct the tests on a Sunday and Wednesday night and we require this to be done through all school holiday periods.

Taking part

Taking part in testing is voluntary and all students will be able to attend school whether they take part in testing or not.

Preit Chahal Principal

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We strongly encourage all pupils to take part in the national testing programme.

Consent for home testing

Consent for home testing is not required as the act of opening the packaging to conduct the test is a demonstration of consent. We do however require all parents/guardians/self-consenting students to read the Privacy Notice on FROG before conducting the home tests.

Recording

In the event of a positive LFD test result, we require you to record the result and then arrange a confirmatory PCR test by calling 119. You must self-isolate as per government guidelines until the result of the PCR are known. Those with a negative antigen LFD test result can continue to attend school/college and use protective measures.

Our child can only test on-site. What should we do?

While we would like all students to transition onto home testing, those that are anxious or require additional support can access a test on site. Please email admin@ga.newcastle.sch.uk

Can my family get tested too?

Families cannot get tests via the schools and colleges. The schools and colleges asymptomatic antigen LFD testing is for staff, pupils and students in schools. The tests will be handed to staff, pupils and students for personal use and should not be used for anyone else. However, families can now access twice-weekly test kits through other routes. Please follow the link below for information on household testing:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/rapid-lateral-flow-testing-for-households-and-bubbles-of-school-pupils-and-staff>

Should I still take part in the asymptomatic testing programme if I have recently tested positive for COVID-19?

If you have tested positive by PCR for COVID-19, you will probably have developed some immunity to the disease. However, it cannot be guaranteed that everyone will develop immunity, or how long it will last. It is possible for PCR tests to remain positive for some time after COVID-19 infection.

Anyone who has previously received a positive COVID-19 PCR test result should not be re-tested within 90 days of that test, unless they develop any new symptoms of COVID-19.

If, however, you do have an LFD test within 90 days of a previous positive COVID-19 PCR test, for example as part of a workplace or community testing programme, and the result of this test is positive, you and your household should self-isolate.

Thank you for your support.

Yours faithfully



Preit Chahal
Principal

FAQs

What type of tests will be used?

We will be sending home Lateral Flow Device (LFD) tests. They are a fast and simple way to test people who do not have symptoms of COVID-19, but who may still be spreading the virus. The tests are easy to use and give results in 30 minutes.

Further information: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/understanding-lateral-flow-antigen-testing-for-people-without-symptoms>

Are LFD tests accurate?

Lateral Flow Devices identify people who are likely to be infectious. These individuals tend to spread the virus to many people and so identifying them through this test is important.

These tests have been widely and successfully used to detect COVID-19 in asymptomatic individuals and are approved by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA). The speed and convenience of the tests supports the detection of the virus in asymptomatic individuals, who would not otherwise have got tested.

The tests are highly specific, with low chance of false positives. They are also very sensitive and are able to identify the majority of the most infectious yet asymptomatic individuals. Extensive evaluation has been carried out on the tests and it shows that they are both accurate and sensitive enough to be used in the community for screening and surveillance purposes.

It is important to remember that these tests are only an aid to help stop the spread of the virus and you should continue to follow other guidance such as on wearing face coverings and social distancing.

How are LFD tests different to PCR tests?

There are 2 main types of test to check if you have coronavirus:

- polymerase chain reaction (PCR) tests check for the genetic material (RNA) of the virus in the sample - you send the sample for processing at a lab
- lateral flow device (LFD) tests detect proteins called 'antigens' produced by the virus - LFD tests give rapid results, in 30 minutes after taking the test.

How will personal information and test results be shared?

When students take a Lateral Flow test, they need to report the result. This is so that their test result can be traced, which means that they need to share some information about the student.

They will need to tell the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC):

- Child's name
- Child's test result
- The reference number on the test Kit

They will also need to tell the school or college their test result.

Under UK law, a child's school or college can collect and store test result data because it is in the 'public interest'.

Schools and colleges will only share information with the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) if the test kits used are found to be faulty. If this happens, DHSC will use our information to contact people who used the faulty tests, so that they can be tested again.

When someone reports test results online, they are sharing information with DHSC. DHSC may share the information with your GP, local government, NHS, and Public Health England. This is so that they can offer health services and guidance if someone needs to self-isolate. They might also use data anonymously (a person's name or contact information) to research COVID-19, and improve our understanding of the virus.

For more information on how personal data is used for testing please see the detailed privacy notice [here](#).

What if a child cannot tolerate a swab down their throat, perhaps due to their disability?

A child or young person may find it difficult to take a throat swab due, for example, to their having difficulty in understanding instructions, needing to keep their mouth open during the period of swabbing or they are having a strong gag reflex. In such cases, where a combined nose and throat swab is not possible, a nose swab from both nostrils can be taken. Similarly, if a nasal swab is not feasible, a throat swab alone will suffice.

[Help and support is available](#) for students, parents and carers, including instructions in different languages on how to test and report the results and a video showing you how to take the test.