

25<sup>th</sup> March 2021

Dear Parent or Carer

As children and young people are settling back into school, we would like to thank you for helping to reduce the rate of infection of COVID-19 in our communities. We want to reassure you that our schools are committed to keeping all children, staff and visitors safe, and we also want to thank you as parents and carers for playing your part.

As testing has been rolled out widely, we would like to remind you about the role of **Rapid Testing (LFD testing)** and the role of **Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR)** testing in Salford.

### **Rapid Testing (LFD testing) – only for people who do not have any symptoms**

Regular LFD testing helps to find people who do not know that they are carrying the virus so they can self-isolate straight away. This breaks the chain of infection quickly and reduces the number of people who would otherwise come into contact with the case. This means less disruption to children's education by preventing onward transmission in the school and social settings, and fewer bubbles needing to isolate in the long run. The tests are simple to do and results are known within 30 minutes.

**Secondary** school pupils are currently taking part in voluntary LFD testing twice a week at home (3–5 days apart) to help identify young people who have COVID-19 but **do not** have symptoms or have not yet started to feel unwell. This is going well and helping more young people stay in school.

### **How you can continue to help:**

- Please encourage your child to complete the testing (in accordance with the guidance), continue to test regularly, report all results to the NHS including negative and voids, and report any positive results to school immediately.
- Students with a positive LFD test result will need to self-isolate in line with the stay-at-home guidance. They will also need to arrange a lab-based **PCR** test to confirm the result if the test was done at home. This can be booked online at [www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test](https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test) or by calling 119. Those with a negative LFD test result can continue to attend school or college and use protective measures in line with the systems of infection control.
- **LFD testing is not suitable for primary-age children**

### **Household testing**

Members of households, childcare or support bubbles of school staff and pupils are also able to access LFD home testing kits. This can be done by going to a collection point to receive 2 packs of home test kits (each pack contains 7 tests).

Go to <https://find-covid-19-rapid-test-sites.maps.test-and-trace.nhs.uk>, to find a collection point. If you are not able to access these collection points, then you can order kits to be delivered direct to your house. Go to [www.gov.uk/order-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-tests](https://www.gov.uk/order-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-tests) to order.

Tests should be undertaken twice weekly.

Full guidance can be found [www.gov.uk/guidance/rapid-lateral-flow-testing-for-households-and-bubbles-of-school-pupils-and-staff](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/rapid-lateral-flow-testing-for-households-and-bubbles-of-school-pupils-and-staff).

### How you can continue to help:

- As a household, continue to take part in this important testing programme but remember, it is only designed to identify cases where there are **no symptoms** and **should not be used with primary-age or younger children**.
- Where you are already taking part in rapid testing through your employer you should continue to follow their arrangements.
- You will need to arrange a lab-based **PCR** test to confirm the positive LFD result if the test was done at home. Rapid tests that are supervised at work or a rapid testing centre do not need a confirmation with PCR.
- Report any positive results to school immediately and to any workplaces that are relevant to your household. Let your social contacts know straight away as well.

### Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) testing – for people with symptoms that may be coronavirus

- If someone in your household has classic COVID-19 symptoms (high temperature, continuous cough, loss of taste or smell), and is waiting to be tested or waiting for test results, **all household members must self-isolate until the results are known**. Do not send children into school or go into work yourself until the test result is known. If the PCR result is positive, all household members must self-isolate for 10 days and follow the Government self-isolation guidance.
- If someone in your household is unwell and has non-classic COVID-19 symptoms, you are now able to book a lab-based **PCR** test. In Salford we still want to rule out the possibility of COVID-19 and encourage people to get tested. This is because we can find people who are unwell with the virus even before they develop any of the three classical symptoms.

Non-classical symptoms include:

- Vomiting/nausea/off your food
- Diarrhoea
- Sleeping more than usual/extreme tiredness
- Listless/restless/agitated
- Shortness of breath
- Feeling cold
- Headache
- Severe body aches
- Sore throat
- Congested or runny nose
- Skin rash
- Complaining of anything that is not feeling themselves

Please note: anyone who is unwell with any of these ‘non-classical’ symptoms are **not expected to isolate immediately** but are strongly advised to go for a test to rule out COVID-19. Go to [www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test](http://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test) and, when prompted, click the box that says “*My local council has asked me to get a test, even though I do not have symptoms*”.

**How you can continue to help:**

- Report any positive COVID-19 test results to school immediately and to any workplaces that are relevant to your household. Let your social contacts know straight away as well.
- You should also remember that we continue to follow the usual sickness absence procedures that have been in place prior to COVID-10. For example, someone with diarrhoea or vomiting should stay away from school until 48 hours clear.

There is no one way to prevent the spread of the infection. We all have to play our part and we thank you for your continued support so that we can together stop the spread of COVID, keep our children and families safe, and keep our schools open to improve the wellbeing and education outcomes for our children.

Yours faithfully



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