



Dear Parent/Guardian,

We are working to keep our school as safe as possible. You may have heard that testing for those without coronavirus symptoms is beginning across the country using new, quicker COVID-19 tests known as 'lateral flow tests'.

Along with the other protective measures we are taking, these tests will help staff and boys 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 spread and help to keep our school open as safely as possible. The test is voluntary, but I would encourage everyone to take it.

We will be testing all staff and boys in years 7 to 13 who want to participate, beginning next week. Please click [here](#) for more information on how the tests are conducted.

If you are happy for your son to be tested, please fill in [this consent form](#) (one per pupil) by **2pm Saturday 2 January** to allow us to plan effectively for the testing process which will begin early next week.

Those taking the test will be supervised by trained staff. The 'lateral flow' tests are quick and easy using a swab of the nose and throat and you will only be contacted by the school if the test is positive or your son has been identified as a close contact of another positive case.

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.

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

Participating staff and pupils who test positive will be informed about their results individually. Parents or legal guardians will also be notified.

Pupils 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). We will be able to provide these PCR test kits to perform at home or you can go to [www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test](http://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test) or call 119 to book a follow-up test. If ordering a PCR test yourself, you should choose to visit a drive-through test site if possible, as it is faster than requesting a home test.

During this time while a boy waits for the PCR result (via text / email) he will need to self-isolate.

If the PCR test returns a positive result he will have to self-isolate and follow the guidance from NHS Test and Trace.

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

The pupil will be able to stay in school and resume his activities as normal. A boy will only be told if he tests 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 school who has tested positive for COVID-19 will be able to return to school if he agrees to be tested once a day for 7 days and the test is negative. If he does not want to take the test, he 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 Bedford School is for people with no symptoms. If your son develops symptoms at any time (such as a high temperature; a new, continuous cough; or a loss or change to his sense of smell or taste) he must immediately self-isolate and book a test by calling 119 or visiting <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>.

We will support our staff and pupils throughout this process, but please contact us at [coronavirusadvice@bedfordschool.org.uk](mailto:coronavirusadvice@bedfordschool.org.uk) if you have any questions.

Kind regards

Andy Macfarlane

**Director of Finance & Operations**