



24th February 2021

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Dear Parents and Carers

UPDATE ON MASS TESTING AND CONSENT FORM FOR STUDENT COVID-19 TESTING AT ST JOHN'S MARLBOROUGH

We are delighted that students can start to return to school in just over a week's time. Their presence has been greatly missed since we said goodbye in December 2020 and the priority now is to get them back safely and as quickly as possible. I am writing to you with the Academy's first part of the approach to getting the students back as safely as possible after the lockdown. There are some significant logistical challenges which are unique to St John's, not least the size of the school and the rural location it enjoys. There are three elements we need to achieve in the next couple of weeks and these are:

1. To familiarise you with some of details surrounding the Government mass testing programme and to establish the number of parents and students giving consent to be tested.
2. To safely begin rolling out the mass testing from Wednesday 3rd March based on the number of students providing consent. Without consent, no tests will be carried out.
3. To establish the plan for the start of the staggered return to face to face teaching from Monday 8th March with all students in school by Friday 12th March.

This letter enables us to achieve point one and I intend to address points two and three by Monday 1st March.

There is a great deal of important information enclosed and we really do need your help and support to get the students back safely.

Consent for Testing

As we have over 1700 students at St John's they will not all be able to return on Monday 8th March, but we do aim to have them all in by Friday 12th March. This is so that we can ensure each consenting student is tested before resuming face to face teaching. To do that we need your help with the following:

- Please can I ask you to complete the consent link found at the end of this letter by **midday on Friday 26th February** at the latest. This is the first important stage in our logistical preparation.
- From midday on Friday 26th February, our test booking system will have gone live and you will be sent a link so that you can book a slot. It is important to stress that we will be prioritising Years 13-10 and you will have to take your child home as soon as they have had their dedicated test.
- Children that can safely walk to school will be allowed to come in 5 minutes before their test, **but they will not be able to congregate in groups as we are still under the current lockdown rules.**



The consent form is for participation in tests designed to detect asymptomatic coronavirus cases. Anyone experiencing symptoms should stay at home and follow [government guidelines to self-isolate](#), even if they have had a recent negative lateral flow test.

Consent relates to the following groups of students and staff as follows:

- **For students younger than 16 years** - this form must be completed by the parent or legal guardian. Please complete one consent form for each child you wish to participate in testing.
- **For students over 16 who are able to provide informed consent** - can complete this form themselves, having discussed participation with their parent / guardian if under 18.
- **For any student who does not have the capacity to provide informed consent** this form must be completed by the parent or legal guardian. Please complete one consent form for each child you wish to participate in testing.

For ease of reference, the consent form covers the following points which are all as directed by GOV.UK. Attached to this letter is the COVID-19 Testing Privacy Statement which contains a reference to the Department for Health and Social Care [Privacy Notice](#).

All students will be offered testing, even those who have been in school during the lockdown. Please consent again even if you have already done so. Consenting students will have their test and following this your son/daughter will be sent home with their registration card including their unique barcode. You will have 24 hours to register them onto the Test and Track website. Please follow the guidance on the Registration Card or alternatively follow this link <https://test-for-coronavirus.service.gov.uk/register-kit>. We will contact you immediately if the result is positive and you will be required to collect your child straight away.

Terms of consent

1. I have had the opportunity to consider the [information](#) provided by the school about the testing, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.
2. In the case of under 16s, I have discussed the testing with my child and my child is happy to participate. If on the day of testing they do not wish to take part, then they will not be made to do so, and consent can be withdrawn at any time ahead of the test.
3. I consent to myself/my child self-administering a nose and throat swab for lateral flow tests. I/they will be supervised and advised by staff but will **not** be assisted if unable to self-swab.
4. I understand that there may be multiple tests required and this consent covers all tests for me. If, on the day of testing I do not wish to take part, then I understand I will not be made to do so, and that consent can be withdrawn at any time ahead of the test.
5. I consent that my sample(s) will be tested for the presence of COVID-19.
6. I understand that if my result(s) are negative on the lateral flow test I will **not** be contacted by the school except where I am a close contact of a confirmed positive test.
7. If the LFT indicates a presence of COVID -19, the school will isolate the student and parents will be notified. The student will need to be collected without delay.
8. If the lateral flow test indicates the presence of COVID-19, I understand that I will be required to self-isolate following public health advice.
9. Please note you will no longer require a confirmatory PCR test if results are positive.
10. If the presence of COVID -19 is detected within school, the student 'bubble' will be requested to self-isolate for 10 days. You will be notified accordingly.

False Negative results

It is important that we understand that Lateral Flow Tests have limitations because an incorrect or misinterpreted result can lead to a false sense of reassurance. For example, if they are infected with the virus but the test produces a false negative result (it says you do not have the virus, even though you do), they may unknowingly spread the virus to other people or not seek the treatment they may need. The results are also only relevant at that point in time and the school community will have many people on site that have not been tested.

It is vital that we continue to adhere to the strict guidance of staying at home if unwell, self-isolating and accessing a PCR test if you develop symptoms and strict adherence to 'Hands, Face and Space'.

Notification of confirmed or suspected COVID-19 cases

It remains vital you let the school know through the COVID-19 email - covid-19@stjohns.excalibur.org.uk if you have any pandemic related concerns, we need to be aware of. This is particularly important if you need to take a test or have a positive case. We also continue to keep up to date our dedicated area on the school website which can be found at: <https://www.stjohns.excalibur.org.uk/latest-covid-19-information/>.

We are fortunate enough to have our Academy Nurse, Jackie Rowberry, at St John's who monitors these concerns regularly and the sooner we know, the sooner we can take action. Please do speak to Jackie if you have any concerns around what is being asked here.

Please follow this link to complete the consent form: [COVID Testing Consent Form](#)

Thank you for your support with this request that schools have been asked to try and fulfil to the best of their abilities.

With kindest regards



Mr I Tucker
Principal

