



Ms Sue Lovecy, Head of School

NHS Test and Trace: COVID-19 testing for staff and secondary students

Dear Parent or guardian of year 7 from September 2021,

We are working to keep our school as safe as possible. You may be aware that testing for those without coronavirus symptoms is being done in secondary schools 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 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 spread and help to keep our school open as safely as possible. The test is voluntary, but I would encourage everyone to take it.

The Department for Education have asked schools to administer lateral flow tests in secondary schools at the start of the Autumn Term. We will therefore be testing secondary school students who want to participate from 2 September 2021.

An instructional leaflet with some more information is on the school website.

If you are happy for your child to be tested, please fill in the form below and the enclosed consent statement (one per pupil/student) and return it to the St Martins School office [via email/in person].

Those taking the test will be supervised by trained school staff so your child will be supported by familiar people. The 'lateral flow' tests are quick and easy using a swab of your nose and throat. For under 18s, staff can oversee the swab process.

Results (which take around half an hour from testing) will be shared directly with staff and pupils participating. Where participants are under 16, parents or legal guardians will also be informed.

The government have informed us that they 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.

For year 7 we will be able to offer that a parent accompanies their child for their first test – these will take place on Friday 3 September, please contact school if you wish to make an appointment.

What if a pupil tests positive?

Participating staff and pupils who test positive will be informed about their results individually. Where participants are under 16, parents or legal guardians will also be notified. Guidance on safe travel and additional precautions will be provided along with test results.

ST MARTINS SCHOOL
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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). School will be able to provide these PCR test kits to perform at home or you can go to www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test or call 119 to book a follow-up test. If ordering a PCR test yourselves, they should choose to visit a drive-through test site if possible, as it is faster than requesting a home test.

During this time while they wait for the PCR result (via text / email) they 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?

They will be able to stay in school and resume their activities as normal. A pupil will only be told if they test 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/college who has tested positive for COVID-19 will be able to return to St Martins 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 St Martins 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 St Martins 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) visiting <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>.

We will support our staff and pupils throughout, but please contact us if you need any further information.

Yours faithfully,

Sue Lovecy

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PARENT/ STUDENT CONSENT FORM

Mass Asymptomatic Lateral Flow Testing for Coronavirus/Covid-19

Please discuss this form with your child, then complete this form and return it to school by TUESDAY 31 AUGUST 2021 OR AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

If we do not receive this completed form and recorded consent, your child will not be tested.

Please complete either box below for YES or NO and return the form to the school.

YES, I give consent to be tested for Coronavirus/ Covid-19

NO, I do not give consent to be tested for Coronavirus/ Covid-19

Student name: Tutor Group.....

Parent name:.....Parent signature: Date:.....

Any comments:

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