

19th March 2021

Dear students, parents, guardians and carers

COVID-19 ASYMPTOMATIC (SYMPTOM-FREE) HOME - TESTING

We have been offering testing for those without coronavirus symptoms on site since students returned from 8th March using the quick - result COVID-19 tests known as 'lateral flow' or 'asymptomatic' tests. Most students are getting to the point where we can now move to supplying home test kits for students to use. This approach has been introduced as a further measure to help staff and students remain in college safely. The test is voluntary, but both the UK Government and we at college are strongly recommending that everyone should take part. Staff are already involved in using home test kits.

Limits to testing

In order to complete a home test, very much like the testing at college, students must be symptom free. If a student has any of the symptoms outlined by the NHS in relation to COVID-19 then they must follow NHS Guidelines, stay at home and book a PCR test at a local test centre. They should not use LFD home-testing if they have symptoms.

We have included on our website an instructional leaflet from the NHS with some more information on how home -testing should be undertaken. Ideally students aged 17 and under would be supervised by an adult and if necessary, helped to report their results to the NHS.

Consent

There is no need to complete a further consent form for home-testing.

Results

All results (which take around half an hour from testing) should be shared via the NHS App / online, i.e. whether they are positive negative or inconclusive. Full instructions on how to do this are included in the leaflet that comes with the kit and on the guide we have included on our website.

In addition, we are required as a college to maintain a database of results, but to avoid students having to report ALL results, we are using the following process:

If a student tests **positive**, in addition to informing the NHS, they should report in as absent on the usual Absence Reporting form (on the college website and on Moodle). If they have had a positive result they will therefore have to self-isolate for 10 days and take a PCR test, following the current public health guidance (book via the link at the bottom of this letter). We then need to undertake our normal 'track and trace' operations to identify those who have been in close contact whilst at college and to issue further guidance as appropriate.

If the test result is **void / inconclusive**, the student should take another test as soon as possible. report this to their Course manager also. If you receive 2 void results in a row you should book a PCR test (booking link below). Remember to check your results within 30 minutes.

If the test result is **negative**, students do NOT have to report that to college, just to the NHS. No need for further action, you can come to college.

HOUSEHOLD TESTING

College will supply the test kits needed to our students, but the government is also now encouraging the households of students to participate in symptom-free testing. If you are a parent or adult of a household, childcare or support bubble you can either:

1. Get an assisted test at your work if it is available.
2. Attend a test site to get tested (where you will be able to see how to take the test) or pick up tests to do at home.
3. Order a test online to do at home.

To find out how to get a free rapid Covid-19 test visit <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/rapid-lateral-flow-testing-for-households-and-bubbles-of-school-pupils-and-staff>

Remember: Regular rapid testing is for those without symptoms of Coronavirus. If you have symptoms, you should continue to book through <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test> or call 119.

Yours Sincerely,

Clare Williams

Assistant Principal (Students)