



SPRINGWELL COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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Dear Parents and Carers

Regular asymptomatic (no symptoms) COVID-19 testing has been in place for all staff and students at secondary schools and colleges since March.

The Government encourages all secondary aged students to undertake regular asymptomatic COVID-19 tests at home. All secondary aged students will be offered tests to take at home twice a week, so that we can reduce the spread of the virus.

Up to one in three people who have COVID-19 can spread the virus without knowing. This is because they have no symptoms. To reduce the spread of the virus, we need to identify those individuals. We can do this in college by carrying out tests at home twice every week.

Testing students at home

We understand that each child has individual needs. Many children will adapt to testing becoming part of their routine, others will find it more challenging. Taking part in testing is voluntary and all children will be able to attend college whether they take part or not. We hope that the option to take the test in the morning **or** the evening will support families to test at home.

Students have brought a pack of 7 tests home along with a leaflet on how to take the test and report the results.

The result of each test needs to be reported using the NHS Test & Trace self-report website: <https://www.gov.uk/report-covid19-result>. Parents/carers are also asked to tell the college the result of each test by completing this form <https://forms.office.com/r/UT07Ty9es1> for each test taken by each child at Springwell.

If a student has a positive test result, they will need to stay home and self-isolate. If the result of the test is unclear (void) they will need to do another one.

Students should take their first test of the week on a Sunday evening after 6.00 pm and their second test on Wednesday evening, also after 6.00 pm. Students should continue to test twice weekly throughout September when the Government will review their advice and guidance on home testing.

While testing is voluntary, I am strongly encouraging all students to take part in the national testing programme.

Please contact us by email to enquiries@springwell.ttct.co.uk or by telephone on 01246 473873 if you have any questions or concerns about home testing.

Thank you for your support.

Yours sincerely

Mr I Wingfield
Headteacher

Some frequently asked questions

What type of tests will be used?

We will be sending home Lateral Flow Device (LFD) tests. They are a fast and simple way to test people who do not have symptoms of COVID-19, but who may still be spreading the virus.

The tests are easy to use and give results in 30 minutes.

Further information: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/understanding-lateral-flow-antigen-testing-for-people-without-symptoms>

Are LFD tests accurate?

Lateral Flow Devices identify people who are likely to be infectious. These individuals tend to spread the virus to many people and so identifying them through this test is important.

These tests have been widely and successfully used to detect COVID-19 in asymptomatic individuals and are approved by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA). The speed and convenience of the tests supports the detection of the virus in asymptomatic individuals, who would not otherwise have got tested.

The tests are highly specific, with low chance of false positives. They are also very sensitive and are able to identify the majority of the most infectious yet asymptomatic individuals. Extensive evaluation has been carried out on the tests and it shows that they are both accurate and sensitive enough to be used in the community for screening and surveillance purposes.

It is important to remember that these tests are only an aid to help stop the spread of the virus and you should continue to follow other guidance such as on wearing face coverings and social distancing.

How are LFD tests different to PCR tests?

There are 2 main types of test to check if you have coronavirus:

- polymerase chain reaction (PCR) tests check for the genetic material (RNA) of the virus in the sample - you send the sample for processing at a lab
- lateral flow device (LFD) tests detect proteins called 'antigens' produced by the virus - LFD tests give rapid results, in 30 minutes after taking the test.

How will personal information and test results be shared?

When students take a Lateral Flow test, they need to report the result. This is so that their test result can be traced, which means that they need to share some information about the student. They will need to tell the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC):

- child's name
- child's test result
- the reference number on the test kit

They will also need to tell the school or college their test result.

Under UK law, a child's school or college can collect and store test result data because it is in the 'public interest'.

Schools and colleges will only share information with the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) if the test kits used are found to be faulty. If this happens, DHSC will use our information to contact people who used the faulty tests, so that they can be tested again.

When someone reports test results online, they are sharing information with DHSC. DHSC may share the information with your GP, local government, NHS, and Public Health England. This is so that they can offer health services and guidance if someone needs to self-isolate.

They might also use data anonymously (a person's name or contact information) to research COVID-19, and improve our understanding of the virus.

For more information on how personal data is used for testing please see the detailed privacy notice (add link to our privacy notice).

What if a child cannot tolerate a swab down their throat, perhaps due to their disability?

A child or young person may find it difficult to take a throat swab due, for example, to their having difficulty in understanding instructions, needing to keep their mouth open during the period of swabbing or they are having a strong gag reflex. In such cases, where a combined nose and throat swab is not possible, a nose swab from both nostrils can be taken. Similarly, if a nasal swab is not feasible, a throat swab alone will suffice.

[Help and support is available](#) for students, parents and carers, including instructions in different languages on how to test and report the results and a video showing you how to take the test.