



THE HELENA ROMANES SCHOOL & SIXTH FORM CENTRE

31st December 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

You have probably seen in the media the news that schools are being asked to introduce Lateral Flow Testing.

This will help to ensure that:

- More asymptomatic Coronavirus cases are picked up and so the risk of them spreading to others is reduced;
- Close contacts of Coronavirus cases will have the choice to remain in school (subject to agreeing to 7 days of Lateral Flow testing) rather than self-isolating.

The test involves a self-administered throat and nasal swab. Results (which take around half an hour from testing) will be shared directly with the student if the coronavirus is identified in the sample. Where participants are under 16, parents or legal guardians will also be informed.

As Mr Gee stated in his earlier letter, Essex Local Authority has advised us not to make any preparations for testing until our return to school, when resource implications are clearer. We will be liaising with the Director for Education for Essex next week and we will provide you with more information at that point.

However, we feel it is important to provide you with some further information at this stage so that (if we are able to provide testing at school) we know if you would like your child to enrol on the programme.

I have attached an instructional leaflet with some more information. In addition, the answers to some key questions are outlined below.

What will happen if my child receives a positive result on a Lateral Flow Test?

You will be informed immediately. Students who receive a positive Lateral Flow Test are asked to go and have a second PCR test at a normal testing station to confirm the result and they should self-isolate for 10 days from the date of this test. The self-isolation period can end early if the PCR test comes back as negative.

What happens if the test is negative?

They will be able to stay in school and resume their activities as normal. A student 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 students may need to repeat the test if the first test was invalid or void for some reason.

How accurate are these tests?

You may have seen in the media that these tests are not as accurate as the PCR tests offered at the main testing sites, but multiple lateral flow tests have been shown to be an effective way to reduce the spread of Coronavirus. The tests have lower sensitivity than PCR tests, but they are better at picking up cases when a person has higher viral load, hence the need to test close contacts frequently (once a day for 7 days).

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What if my child develops symptoms?

School testing programmes are planned 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 or visiting <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>.

How do I sign-up my child?

All those who give consent will be included in any future testing programme. Both parents and children must give consent where the child is under 16.

Please complete the following [form](#) to either give or withhold your consent.

Can you help?

The logistics around delivering tests for a school the size of ours are challenging. In order to develop our capacity, we will need to ask for volunteers to help us. At this stage, we are simply trying to gauge the level of support available.

If you would be able to offer some morning or afternoon slots to support us (training will be given), please fill in the following [form](#).

Yours faithfully,

Mr N Foster
Deputy Headteacher