

MONDAY 04 JANUARY 2021

BOURNE ACADEMY / SPALDING ACADEMY / GILES ACADEMY
DFE / GOVERNMENT UPDATE FOR PARENTS

Test and Trace: COVID-19 Lateral Flow Device (LFD) testing for staff and students

Dear parent / carer,

We are working to keep all three of our SLATrust schools as safe as possible. You will now have heard that testing for those without coronavirus symptoms is beginning across the country using new COVID-19 tests known as 'lateral flow device tests' (LFD tests).

Along with the other protective measures we are taking, we feel that 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 three Trust schools open as safely as possible.

It is important to note that the test is voluntary, and although we would encourage everyone to take it, we understand that it is a personal decision and one for families to discuss.

We will be starting to test staff and some students who want to participate in the testing programme commencing from Wednesday 06 January 2021 – beginning with staff; Year 11; Year 12 & 13.

Therefore, from Tuesday 05 January students in Year 11; 12 & 13 will be able to sign up for a testing appointment, with all other Year Groups being able to sign up over the following week.

Our aim is to initially test as many staff and students that want the LFD test before they return to school.

I enclose a link to an instructional leaflet with some more information:

- https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/946612/How_to_do_your_test_COVID_19_instruction_leaflet_for_schools.pdf

Consent form:

If you are happy for your child to be tested:

- Please fill in and return the Testing Consent Form, which will be sent in an accompanying message via ParentMail or the attached [Google Form at Giles Academy](https://www.gilesacademy.co.uk/nhs-test-and-trace-consent-form-for-covid-19-testing-at-giles-academy/) (<https://www.gilesacademy.co.uk/nhs-test-and-trace-consent-form-for-covid-19-testing-at-giles-academy/>).

- Please note that it will be one per student and please try to complete by the time of booking your test.

Please note that if you do not want you / your child to be tested then there is no need to complete any paperwork and please do not fill in any of the information. It is only staff / students that want to take up this offer to have the lateral flow test that will be tested, all other students will remain in class.

Booking an initial testing appointment:

Please note that you will be able to book an appointment for your son / daughter via a Google Form in all schools.

The details for this process will be shared in an accompanying email in the next 48 hours.

It will be a relatively simple booking process and parents / carers can contact the school if there are any problems.

The LFD test:

Those taking the test will be supervised by a mixture of teaching; non-teaching support staff and a small number of volunteers, using required PPE. Although these are not medically trained staff, all of the staff members and volunteers will have undergone the required Government training.

Regarding the small number of volunteers, please be reassured that all these individuals will not be left unaccompanied with any student/s and all processes will be monitored by Trust staff members.

The lateral flow device tests are known to be quick, using a swab of your nose and throat.

Please note that the staff involved in testing can oversee the swab process to support the students only if needed, as we know some students may be nervous. If on the day of testing a staff member / student does 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.

The results will typically take around half an hour from testing.

Testing will be offered free of charge and parents/carers and students will not be informed of negative tests.

There has been some controversy over the plans for lateral flow testing in schools, but we have been informed by the Government that 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. 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.

If you have been in receipt of a positive COVID test within the past 90 days:

Please note that we will contact all parents / carers and staff who have tested positive for COVID-19 in the previous 90 days, to offer advice about undertaking the lateral flow test, as research shows the test may be unreliable for this small group of individuals. Staff and students can still take part in the future testing process and we will offer advice and support regarding any results received.

What if a staff member / student tests positive?

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

Students will need to take a further 'PCR test' (i.e. similar to those done in local and regional testing sites) on the same day, or as soon as possible. You can or call 119 to book a follow-up test or go to:

- <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-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?

Students 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 a 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** who has tested positive for COVID-19 they will be able to return to school if they agree to be tested once a day for 7 school days and the test is negative.

If an individual student or staff member does not want to take the test over 7 school days, they will need to self-isolate as per the national guidelines. This does not apply to household members or close contacts outside of school who will still need to self-isolate. Further details will be provided at the time.

If any student would prefer to self-isolate instead of doing daily testing, they can.

What if my child develops symptoms?

This testing programme at school is for people with no symptoms. If your child develops symptoms at any time – i.e. 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>

We will support our staff and pupils throughout, but please contact us if you need this information in any other language or format or if you have any questions.

If you have any further questions please email:

- **Bourne Academy:** StudentAbsence@bourneacademy.org
- **Spalding Academy:** StudentAbsence@spaldingacademy.org.uk
- **Giles Academy:** StudentAbsence@gilesacademy.co.uk

Finally, we will continue to strongly encourage all parents / carers; students and staff to monitor for any symptoms of COVID-19 and keep the school fully up to date with all test results whether positive or negative.

Please note:

- **In the case of a household member testing positive and / or track and trace app notification, a student / staff member will need to self-isolate following national guidance. Please do NOT send your child into school if anyone on the household is waiting for a test result.**

Returning to school:

Please see a reminder regarding current plans for students to return to school:

- **Year 11 (& 13 at Bourne Academy):** **Return on 11 JAN 2021**
- **All year groups:** **Return on 18 JAN 2021**

Kind regards,



Mrs Lucy Conley

SLATrust Executive Headteacher