



College COVID testing to begin this week

Dear Student, Parent or Carer

We have been busy making preparations for asymptomatic testing to take place at College using rapid Lateral Flow Tests. Once the registration process is complete it takes a couple of minutes to complete the test with the result available 30 minutes or so later. It is my view that it is really important for us to test anyone who works or studies at College in order to continue to play our part in keeping ourselves, our families and our community as safe as we can during the pandemic.

I am pleased to report that the trial run of our testing arrangements on Friday went well. Chris Hart, Premises Manager, and I volunteered to be test subjects for the purpose of our trial run and this enabled the staff involved in registration, assisting subjects with how to self-administer the test as well as those doing the processing of results, to put their training into practice. It's the first time I've ever been pleased to see the absence of positive feedback on a test that I've done!

Following the trial run we reviewed our risk assessment and now feel ready to begin weekly testing of staff currently working from College, starting on Monday 11th January. In implementing the testing we are following the Clinical Standard Operating Procedure provided by the Department of Health and Social Care, and I am further reassured by the fact that although not a requirement several members of our testing team having significant laboratory experience.

Assuming staff testing goes well we will look to test students who are continuing to study at College during the current lockdown, starting later this week. This will require the student's consent and involves two tests over a 5 day period in the same way that mass testing will be undertaken when we return to 'face to face' teaching. We will communicate with the students currently coming into College regarding consent and arrangements for testing in the next day or two.

I have included some photos below to show you the various aspects of the process which I hope will provide some reassurance.



On a personal note, I was somewhat anxious about self-swabbing (given my feeble lack of bravery) but although it was a little unpleasant it wasn't painful, and if I can manage it I think everyone else will find it relatively straightforward.

I have included below a link to the views of the Chief Medical Officer for NHS test and trace on the benefits of community and workplace testing via Lateral

Flow Devices:

https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2021/jan/09/more-asymptomatic-testing-can-be-a-vital-tool-to-stop-the-spread-of-covid?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other

As I said at the beginning of the email I firmly believe we need to do this if it in any way protects ourselves, our families, other members of the College, and our wider community.

Kind regards

Ed