



Tuesday, 29 December 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

The day we broke up for the Christmas holidays, the government announced that we were to face a staggered return in the new year for all secondary schools. This staggered start was to allow schools to put into place a rapid coronavirus testing programme. Clearly this news came as quite a surprise and at a point when we had little information to pass on.

Unfortunately, we still have little information but the government has continued to insist that schools will be returning in the new year. This decision appears to be ignoring the concerns raised about the new strain being easily transmitted between young people. I believe I now need to share what information I have with you.

Returning to school in 2021

Monday 4th January 2021 remains an INSET day and therefore no pupils are required to attend school.

Tuesday 5th January 2021 will see ALL Year 11 students return to school at 8.50am and will continue with their normal timetable of lessons. Also, critical key workers and families who are receiving enhanced support from other agencies are also entitled to send their children into school from the 5th January 2021. **Please can Parents/Carers of pupils in in Year 7 to 10 who meet this criteria text the Academy on 07860 034 245 with your child's name by Sunday 3rd January if your child will be attending.** These pupils should attend at their normal allocated time – Years 7, 8 and 9 at 8.40 and Year 10 at 8.50.

Students in Years 7 – 10 who are not included within one of the groups above should remain at home and will access their learning remotely. To enable us to put together a comprehensive plan for remote learning, work for Tuesday 5th January 2021 will be on Classcharts and this can be accessed in the usual way. More information about how this work will be presented and how it is to be submitted will follow in another letter early next week. Any parent or carer that has issues with remote computer access or access of Classcharts should contact school via the school email enquires@thornhillacademy.com to explain their issues and we will look to support you with this.

COVID-19 Rapid testing

We have also been informed by the DfE and NHS that as of the 5th January 2021 we will be conducting COVID-19 rapid testing. This rapid test is known as a 'lateral flow' tests. This test is for those who have no coronavirus symptoms and is being introduced in all secondary schools across the country.

The 'lateral flow' tests are quick, using a swab of your nose and throat. Those taking the test will be supervised by trained staff.



Any positive results will be shared directly with the participating pupil, their parents /carers and staff. The government believes this testing scheme will help identify carriers of the virus but also help to monitor close contacts by testing regularly instead of isolating pupils for 10 days. 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 (99.68% specificity). The tests do have lower sensitivity, but they are better at picking up cases when a person has higher viral load, hence the need to test frequently.

Along with the other protective measures we are taking, these tests will help staff and pupils to remain in school safely. It is believed that 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 school operating as safely as possible.

The test is voluntary, but parents and carers are being encouraged to let their children take it.

We will be testing all staff from week commencing 4th January 2021, and we will begin to roll this out to pupils as soon as practicable after that, for those who want to participate.

If you are happy for your child to be tested, please fill in the consent form online here <https://tinyurl.com/thornhillcovidtestform>

Testing will be offered free of charge.

I appreciate that you may feel that this information is coming to you late in the day. For this I can only apologise, but I had hoped that more information would have become available during the holiday period, unfortunately this has not been the case. Clearly there is a lot of work that needs to be done behind the scenes and some of the finer detail we are still working through. I will continue to keep you updated with further developments as and when they occur.

In the meantime, I hope, that the New Year will bring a more positive outlook for us all in relation to what are currently very challenging, frustrating and concerning times.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mr Redford', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Mr Redford
Headteacher

Frequently Asked Questions

What if a pupil tests positive?

Participating staff and pupils who test positive will be informed about their results individually. Parents or legal guardians will also be notified. Guidance on safe travel and additional precautions will be provided along with test results.

Pupils will need to take a further 'PCR test' (similar to those done in local and regional testing sites) on the same day or as soon as possible. This is to be organised by the parent / carer of the pupils by going to www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test or call 119 to book a follow-up 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?

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 anything 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.

What if a close contact at school tests positive?

A close contact of someone in school who has tested positive for COVID-19 will be able to return to school if they agree to be tested once a day for 7 days (subject to change) and the test is negative. If they do not want to take the test, 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, but if you would prefer to self-isolate instead of doing daily testing, you may.

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 (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 TO DO YOUR TEST

WHILE THIS IS A SELF-SWAB TEST, THERE WILL BE A TESTING HELPER WHO WILL OVERSEE THINGS AND PROVIDE HELP IF YOU NEED

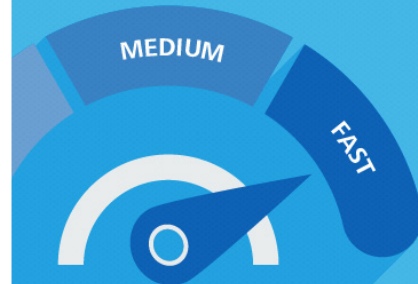
1



YOUR COVID-19 TEST WILL BE SCHEDULED. IF YOU ARE UNDER 16, YOUR PARENT / CARER WILL HAVE CONSENTED

2

YOUR TEST WILL BE FAST AND WHILE IT MIGHT FEEL A LITTLE UNCOMFORTABLE, IT WON'T HURT YOU

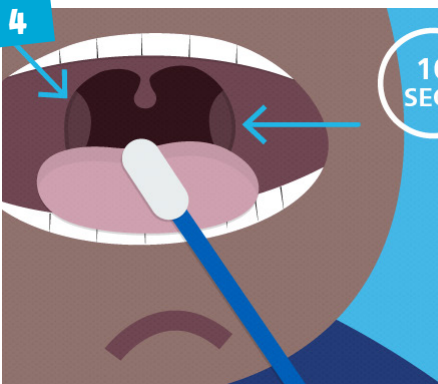


3



BLOW YOUR NOSE IF NEEDED. WASH AND DRY/SANITISE YOUR HANDS. REMOVE THE SWAB BEING CAREFUL NOT TO TOUCH THE SOFT PART

4



10 SECS

OPEN YOUR MOUTH WIDE AND USE A MIRROR TO LOOK AT THE BACK OF YOUR THROAT, THEN USE THE SWAB TO RUB FIRMLY 4 TIMES ON EACH SIDE

5

REMOVE THE SWAB CAREFULLY WITHOUT TOUCHING YOUR TEETH, TONGUE OR GUMS

6

GENTLY PLACE IT ABOUT 2-2.5 CM INSIDE ONE OF YOUR NOSTRILS. ROLL THE SWAB 4-5 TIMES ALONG THE LINING OF THE NOSTRIL, THIS WILL TAKE 10-15 SECONDS

7

AFTER THIS, YOU'RE DONE, GENTLY REMOVE THE SWAB BEING CAREFUL NOT TO LET ANYTHING TOUCH THE TIP

8

YOUR SWAB CAN THEN BE PLACED IN A TUBE FOR TESTING, THIS TAKES ABOUT 30 MINUTES



9



YOUR SCHOOL / COLLEGE WILL CONTACT YOU OR YOUR PARENT / CARER WITH THE RESULTS AND LET YOU KNOW WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

Thornhill Academy – COVID-19 Testing Privacy Statement

Ownership of the Personal Data

To enable the Covid-19 testing to be completed at Thornhill Academy, we need to process personal data for staff and pupils taking part, including sharing of personal data where we have a legal obligation. Thornhill Academy is the Data Controller for the data required for processing the tests and undertaking any actions which are needed by the school / college to ensure we meet our public health and safeguarding legal obligations. All data is processed under section 175 of the Education Act 2002. Data Controllership is then passed to the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC) at the point that we transfer data to them.

Personal Data involved in the process

We use the following information to help us manage and process the tests:

- Name
- Date of birth (and year group)
- Gender
- Home postcode
- Email address
- Mobile number
- Unique barcode assigned to each individual test and which will become the primary reference number for the tests
- Test result
- Parent/guardians contact details (if required)

We will only use information that is collected directly from you specifically for the purpose of the tests, even if you have previously provided us with this information.

How we store your personal information

The information will only be stored securely on local spreadsheets in school/college whilst it is needed. It will also be entered directly onto DHSC digital services for the NHS Test and Trace purposes. Schools/colleges will not have access to the information on the digital service once it has been entered.

Processing of Personal Data Relating to Positive test results

The member of staff, pupil, student or parent (depending on contact details provided) will be informed of the result by the school/college and advised how to book a confirmatory test.

The school/college will use this information to enact their own COVID isolation processes without telling anyone who it is that has received the positive test.

The information will be transferred to DHSC, who will share this with the NHS. PHE and the Local Government will use this information for wider test and trace activities as well as statistical and research purposes.

This information is processed and shared under obligations set out in Public Health legislation under Regulations 3(1) and (4) of the Health Service (Control of Patient Information) Regulations 2002 (COPI) which allows the sharing of data for COVID related purposes.

This information will be kept by the school/college for up to 14 days and by the NHS for 8 years.

Processing of Personal Data Relating to Negative test results

The school/college will record a negative result and the information will be transferred to DHSC, NHS, PHE and the Local Government who will use the information for statistical and research purposes.

This information is processed and shared under obligations set out in Public Health legislation under Regulations 3(1) and (4) of the Health Service (Control of Patient Information) Regulations 2002 (COPI) which allows the sharing of data for COVID related purposes.

This information will be kept by the school/college for up to 14 days and by the NHS for 8 years.

Data Sharing Partners

The personal data associated with test results will be shared with DHSC, NHS, PHE and local government to ensure they take the necessary actions they need to complete under their legal obligations.

Your Rights

Under data protection law, you have rights including:

Your right of access - You have the right to ask us for copies of your personal information.

Your right to rectification - You have the right to ask us to rectify personal information you think is inaccurate. You also have the right to ask us to complete information you think is incomplete.

Your right to erasure - You have the right to ask us to erase your personal information in certain circumstances.

Your right to restriction of processing - You have the right to ask us to restrict the processing of your personal information in certain circumstances.

Your right to object to processing - You have the the right to object to the processing of your personal information in certain circumstances.

Your right to data portability - You have the right to ask that we transfer the personal information you gave us to another organisation, or to you, in certain circumstances.

You are not required to pay any charge for exercising your rights. If you make a request, we have one month to respond to you.

Please contact us at dataprotection@thornhillacademy.com if you wish to make a request.

How to complain

If you have any concerns about our use of your personal information, you can make a complaint to us by contacting the Data Protection Officer:

Mr C Lane
Data Protection Officer
Thornhill Academy
Thornholme Road
Sunderland
SR2 7NA

Telephone: 0191 500 7981

Email: dataprotection@thornhillacademy.com

You can also complain to the ICO if you are unhappy with how we have used your data.

The ICO's address:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Helpline number: 0303 123 1111