



**BIDDULPH
HIGH
SCHOOL**

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Chief Executive Officer: **Mark Kent**

4th January 2021

FOR THE ATTENTION OF THE PERSON WITH PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

Re: NHS Test and Trace: COVID-19 testing for staff and students

We are working to keep our school as safe as possible. We fully understand how concerned you must be feeling about the current situation, but I can reassure you that we are doing all we can to keep our school as safe as possible for your child. Our full risk assessment and guidelines are available on our school website: <https://biddulphhigh.co.uk/information-on-covid-19/>

For now, we will be educating your child remotely using MS Teams. Your child will be able to access live/recorded lessons or remote work. Arrangements for the next three weeks can be found in the letters section of our website: <https://biddulphhigh.co.uk/letters-newsletters/>. Remote learning will continue for as long as we are prevented from offering face-to-face provision for anyone except our identified students. **We will be sending a letter tomorrow (Tuesday 5th January) outlining the specific arrangements for each year group. This will remain provisional depending on government updates.**

You may have heard that testing for those without coronavirus symptoms is beginning across the country using new, quicker COVID-19 tests known as 'lateral flow' tests.

Along with the other protective measures we are taking, 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 school open as safely as possible. Last term numerous learners and staff needed to isolate due to COVID-19 and it is for this reason that we welcome national testing in school. The test is voluntary, but I would encourage everyone to take it.

The tests have arrived in school. Our intention is to test all staff and some students this week and then roll out the testing to all students. The following leaflet is for your guidance: [Testing Guidance for Parents](#)

If you are happy for your child to be tested, please follow the instructions on the **Consent Form which is now available on ParentPay**. Any student who is over 16 years of age can self-consent, but I would encourage you to discuss the tests if this applies to your child.

You will need to access your ParentPay account to give consent. We cannot accept emails or other forms of communication instead of the ParentPay response, as we know that only you have access to your ParentPay account. If you would like a paper copy of the consent form, please contact the school office from Wednesday 6th January. No test will be conducted on your child if they are under 16 and we have not received your consent. Similarly, we will only conduct tests on those students who are over 16 with their consent.

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Those taking the test will be supervised by trained staff. The 'lateral flow' tests are quick and easy using a swab of your nose and throat. For under 18's, staff can oversee the swab process.

Results (which take around half an hour from testing) will be shared directly with staff and students participating. Where participants are under 16, parents or legal guardians will also be informed.

We know 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 (99.68% specificity). 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.

Testing will be offered free of charge.

What if a student tests positive?

Participating staff and students who test positive will be informed about their results individually. Where participants are under 16, parents or legal guardians 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' (similar to those done in local and regional testing sites) on the same day (or as soon as possible). School will be able to provide these PCR test kits to perform at home or you can go to www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test or call 119 to book a follow-up test. If ordering a PCR test yourselves, you 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 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/college tests positive?

A close contact of someone in school/college 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 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 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 (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 are constantly looking at the national picture. The new variant of the virus in London and the South East is currently increasing at a rate of between 100% to 150% a day and you will be aware that this area of the UK is now in Tier 4. I cannot thank families enough for their support last term and now with the national picture as it is, I urge families to work with us as together we keep our community safe and open:

- During the time at home, please limit the contact your son/daughter has with others.

- Please talk to them about the new variant of the virus and how it is spreading much more rapidly. Keeping their distance to 2m, wearing a mask and washing their hands regularly will help to prevent the spread of the virus.
- It will help if parents/carers take learners for a PCR COVID-19 test before they return on 11th January 2021 (Years 11 and 13) and 18th January (Years 9, 10 and 12). Please use the option of Local Authority Test. The Government has increased the capacity of these tests.
- Please take your son's/daughter's temperature before they come to school. If their temperature is above their normal or if they are feeling at all unwell, please take them to get a test and do not send them into school.

We will support our staff and students throughout, but please contact us if you need this information in any other language or format or if you have any questions. You can call the office on 01782 523977 or email office@biddulphhigh.co.uk.

Yours faithfully,



Mrs E C Robinson
Headteacher