



# ST THOMAS MORE CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

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Dear All,

## Full Reopening of School and Covid-19 Lateral Flow testing

As you will be aware from the Prime Minister's announcements yesterday all students will return to schools from Monday 8<sup>th</sup> March, with secondary schools welcoming different year groups back across the week. I know that you and your children will welcome this news; we are currently working through the new guidance which is very similar to the way we were operating in the Autumn term.

Once we have full details of the return and any changes in how school will operate we will share these with you but in the meantime I need to let you know about a significant aspect of the Government's plan.

As part of the full reopening of school, all students will be offered Covid-19 Lateral Flow Device (LFD) tests on their return. This testing will consist of three separate tests in school, 3 to 5 days apart, and then twice weekly testing at home.

These are quick and simple self administered tests, enabling us to rapidly test staff and students without the need for a laboratory.

The testing has the following objectives:

- to identify asymptomatic but potentially infectious individuals, helping to prevent or break the chain of transmission of Covid-19 at school
- to give increased confidence to students and staff around in-person education

The testing of students is on a **voluntary** basis and will take place in the new dining hall extension. The test facility has been successfully operated by trained staff volunteers since January and we will also be using additional staff who are employed by North Tyneside Public Health as part of their community testing programme.

Prior to testing, you must complete the 'Student Consent form for COVID-19 testing in secondary schools and colleges.' This will be a Parentmail Form that will be shared with you. You will also have been provided with a Privacy Notice for information.

Once students have completed a test they are free to carry on with their normal day. The tests take about 30 minutes to process. If the test is positive parents will be contacted immediately to collect your child. The whole of your household will then be required to self isolate for 10 days, in line with Government Guidance. If the test is negative you will not be contacted.

Your child will be given a barcode when they are tested which you should register online at [Register a coronavirus test \(lateral flow test\) - GOV.UK \(test-for-](https://www.gov.uk/register-a-coronavirus-test)



[coronavirus.service.gov.uk](https://coronavirus.service.gov.uk)). In the event of a being notified of a Positive LFD result, registration must take place within 24hrs.

I have attached some Frequently Asked Questions but if you have any further questions please contact school via [info@stmacademy.org.uk](mailto:info@stmacademy.org.uk)

Yours sincerely



Mr D Watson  
Headteacher

### **Rapid Testing in Schools FAQs**

- 1) **Why are rapid tests taking place in schools?** They are being used to identify students and staff who have Covid but are not displaying symptoms. They are not sensitive enough to identify all cases but can help in identifying some.
- 2) **My child has Covid symptoms, should I send them to school for a test?** No, this is not the purpose of the school tests. Your child and household should isolate and you should book a PCR test as soon as possible.
- 3) **Does my child have to have a test?** No, testing is entirely voluntary.
- 4) **If my child does not have a test can they still come to school?** Yes, as long as your child does not have any symptoms they can still attend school.
- 5) **Are the tests hard to do?** Your child needs to swab the tonsil areas of the throat and then one nostril. Some adults and children will find this harder than others.
- 6) **What if my child has difficulties?** Test centre staff will support your child, explain the process and reassure them. If your child is unable to carry out the test they will again be reassured and go back to their lesson.
- 7) **Can someone do the test for my child?** Test centre staff at St Thomas More are not trained to administer tests. It may be possible to arrange for you to come into school and administer the test.
- 8) **Can we do the initial tests at home?** No, all of the initial three Secondary school tests must be carried out in school. Home tests will then be issued for ongoing use but only to students who have already been tested in school, in line with Government guidance.
- 9) **What happens if my child refuses a test after I have given permission?** No child will be forced to take a test.
- 10) **If I do not give permission can my child take the test if they want to?** No, any child under 16 needs parental consent. If your child is over 16 we would contact you to discuss the situation.
- 11) **My child tests negative, does that mean they definitely haven't got Covid?** No, the rapid tests are not as sensitive as PCR tests and so do not pick up all cases. Your child should continue to observe all Covid rules both in and out of school.
- 12) **My child tests positive with an LFD test, do they need to have a confirmatory PCR test?** It depends: a) If the test was taken in school under supervision, a PCR test is not necessary so they should begin the 10 day isolation period (along with their household and any close contacts) b) If the test was taken at home they would need to have a confirmatory PCR test; if that is negative they can return to school, if it is positive they must self isolate.
- 13) **My child has tested positive for Covid in the past 90 days, should they take the LFD tests?** No, it is likely that the previous infection may still result in a positive test so they should not take the LFD tests. They can return to school as normal unless they develop Covid symptoms in which case they should stay at home and you should call 111 for medical advice.