

01/01/2021

School re-opening in January 2021

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

Dear Parent or Carer,

I hope that you and your family had an enjoyable and safe Christmas, notwithstanding the COVID-19 restrictions that we are all currently living with.

As you know, we have worked incredibly hard since the start of the pandemic in March to keep our academy as safe as possible, and that work has continued over the Christmas holiday period. I would like to thank our incredible staff for their commitment and professionalism, which has seen many working over the holidays.

My letter today includes important information relating to when your child will return to school at the start of this coming term, and relating to the COVID-19 testing process for staff and students.

Information relating to school re-opening in January 2021

The Government has now announced that secondary schools and colleges will re-open on a phased basis, as follows:

- If your child is classed as vulnerable or if you or your partner is a key worker, then your child can return to school on Tuesday 5th January. They will receive some face-to-face teaching in school when they return and will also benefit from the virtual lesson schedule. The academy will be open from the usual time and students are expected to meet at their normal year group bubble locations prior to tutor time.
- If your child is in Year 11, then your child will return to school on Monday 11th January. Your child is expected to engage fully with their remote learning during the week of 5th January so that they maintain the good progress they have already made this academic year.
- If your child is in Years 7, 8, 9, 10, then your child will return to school on Monday 18th January. Your child is expected to engage fully with their remote learning during the weeks of both Tuesday 5th and Monday 11th January so that they maintain the good progress they have already made this academic year.
- We will send a timetable to all parents and carers with a schedule of live lessons on Monday 4th January. This document will also be placed on the website and you will be notified of any changes.
- If your child is due to sit external exams from week commencing 11th January, these will continue as planned. We will confirm arrangements with students and families shortly.
- NYCC transport has confirmed that all usual transport will continue to operate for the two week period from Tuesday 5th for those still accessing the academy.

As before, a great deal of planning and risk assessment has gone into ensuring that our school continues to be as safe as possible for students and staff, in line with latest Government and Public Health England guidance.

We will continue to take decisions in the best interests of our students, working with you and keeping you informed every step of the way, while following Government rules and advice.

Information relating to NHS Test and Trace: COVID-19 testing for staff and students

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

Along with the other protective measures we are taking, these tests can help staff and students 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. The test is voluntary. However, we are participating as a school and I would encourage all students and staff to take part as well.

We will be testing all staff and students who want to participate from the week commencing 5th January 2021, extending this as more students return in following weeks.

I enclose an instructional leaflet with some more information (below) as well as a consent form (links below).

If you are happy for your child to be tested, please complete the two separate Google Forms below:

- Fill in the registration form using the following link <https://forms.gle/7BXM7U3hM35T6f7M6>
- Complete the consent statement form on the following link (one per child) <https://forms.gle/eAfH4cQxmpt9Rvev6>

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.

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

The Government has shared information with us from Oxford University and Public Health England, which have indicated the tests are as accurate in identifying a case as a 'PCR test' (99.68% specificity). The tests have lower sensitivity but are considered 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.

I hope that the information in this letter is helpful and clear. Please do ensure you complete the form below and the consent form attached, if you are happy for your child to take a COVID-19 test, by 11th January 2020. If you have any questions, please do also email these to enquiries@ripon.outwood.com.

In the meantime, I would like to take this opportunity to wish you and your family a very happy New Year. Please do continue to take care and stay safe.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'W. Pratt', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

William Pratt
Principal

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, 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 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 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 (England, Wales and Northern Ireland) or 0300 303 2713 (Scotland) or visiting <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>.

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 school office from Tuesday 5th on 01765 604564 or email enquiries@ripon.outwood.com