

THE MARVELL COLLEGE

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Dear Parents/Carer

Regular asymptomatic (no symptoms) COVID-19 testing has been in place for all staff at schools and colleges since January.

The Government has recently announced that all secondary aged students will also be offered regular asymptomatic COVID-19 tests to take at home. All secondary aged students will be offered tests to take at home twice a week, so that we can reduce the spread of the virus.

Up to one in three people who have COVID-19 can spread the virus without knowing. This is because they have no symptoms. To reduce the spread of the virus, we need to identify those individuals. We can do this in schools by carrying out tests at home twice every week.

Testing students at home

We understand that each child has individual needs. Many children will adapt to testing becoming part of their routine, others will find it more challenging. Taking part in testing is voluntary and all children will be able to attend school whether they take part or not. We hope that the option to take the test in the morning **or** the evening will support families to test at home.

Test kits will be handed to students from school. Tests will come in packs of 3 or 7. Students will initially be given either 2 packs of 3 or 1 pack of 7. This will be a sufficient number of kits for the first 3 weeks of testing. The tests are free of charge.

We recommend that students take a home test on Tuesday mornings before school and then Friday evenings after school as this will minimise the number of school days missed due to self-isolation should they test positive.

The result of each test needs to be reported using the NHS Test & Trace self-report website:
<https://www.gov.uk/report-covid19-result>.

Parent/carers will also need to inform the school of **positive** results by contacting their child's Year Team.

If a student has a positive test result, they will need to stay home and self-isolate. If the result of the test is unclear (void) they will need to do another one. Students have the option to take the test and report it the evening before school, but no earlier.

Taking part

Taking part in testing is voluntary and all students will be able to attend school whether they take part in testing or not.

I am strongly encouraging all students to take part in the national testing programme. Please contact admin@themarvellcollege.com if you have any questions or concerns about home testing.

Please find on the reverse of this letter some FAQs which you may find useful.

Thank you for your support.

Mr J Capper
Head Teacher



Some frequently asked questions

What type of tests will be used?

We will be sending home Lateral Flow Device (LFD) tests. They are a fast and simple way to test people who do not have symptoms of COVID-19, but who may still be spreading the virus.

The tests are easy to use and give results in 30 minutes.

Further information: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/understanding-lateral-flow-antigen-testing-for-people-without-symptoms>

Are LFD tests accurate?

Lateral Flow Devices identify people who are likely to be infectious. These individuals tend to spread the virus to many people and so identifying them through this test is important.

These tests have been widely and successfully used to detect COVID-19 in asymptomatic individuals and are approved by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA). The speed and convenience of the tests supports the detection of the virus in asymptomatic individuals, who would not otherwise have got tested.

The tests are highly specific, with low chance of false positives. They are also very sensitive and are able to identify the majority of the most infectious yet asymptomatic individuals. Extensive evaluation has been carried out on the tests and it shows that they are both accurate and sensitive enough to be used in the community for screening and surveillance purposes.

It is important to remember that these tests are only an aid to help stop the spread of the virus and you should continue to follow other guidance such as on wearing face coverings and social distancing.

How are LFD tests different to PCR tests?

There are 2 main types of test to check if you have coronavirus:

- polymerase chain reaction (PCR) tests check for the genetic material (RNA) of the virus in the sample - you send the sample for processing at a lab
- lateral flow device (LFD) tests detect proteins called 'antigens' produced by the virus - LFD tests give rapid results, in 30 minutes after taking the test.

How will personal information and test results be shared?

When students take a Lateral Flow test, they need to report the result. This is so that their test result can be traced, which means that they need to share some information about the student.

They will need to tell the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC):

- child's name
- child's test result
- the reference number on the test Kit

They will only need to tell the school if their test result is positive.

Under UK law, a child's school or college can collect and store test result data because it is in the 'public interest'.

Schools and colleges will only share information with the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) if the test kits used are found to be faulty. If this happens, DHSC will use our information to contact people who used the faulty tests, so that they can be tested again.

When someone reports test results online, they are sharing information with DHSC. DHSC may share the information with your GP, local government, NHS, and Public Health England. This is so that they can offer health services and guidance if someone needs to self-isolate. They might also use data anonymously (a person's name or contact information) to research COVID-19, and improve our understanding of the virus. For more information on how personal data is used for testing please see the detailed privacy notice

<https://www.themarvellcollege.com/parents/school-policies-documents>.

What if a child cannot tolerate a swab down their throat, perhaps due to their disability?

A child or young person may find it difficult to take a throat swab due, for example, to their having difficulty in understanding instructions, needing to keep their mouth open during the period of swabbing or they are having a strong gag reflex. In such cases, where a combined nose and throat swab is not possible, a nose swab from both nostrils can be taken. Similarly, if a nasal swab is not feasible, a throat swab alone will suffice.

Help and support is available for students, parents and carers, including instructions in different languages on how to test and report the results and a video showing you how to take the test.