



22nd December 2020

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

Dear Parent or guardian,

This letter is an adapted version of a generic letter supplied to schools by the UK Government. It provides information about the testing of students for COVID-19 in school at the start of the Lent term in January and arrangements for registration for your son. It also includes a request for volunteers for staffing the testing station in school, including an online sign-up form for volunteers.

We are working to keep More House School as safe as possible. Following my letter at the end of last week, you know 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 pupils 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. The test is voluntary, but I strongly urge everyone to take it.

We will be testing all staff and secondary school and college age students who want to participate from the week commencing 4th January 2021. Pupils in the junior years are not currently eligible for these government-supplied tests.

I enclose an instructional leaflet with some more information.

Your son can only access the tests by his parent or guardian submitting the combined Registration and Informed Consent form. For ease and efficiency, we have translated these forms into a single, online More House School return which is designed to be as quick and easy to complete as possible. Such online returns also greatly reduce the administrative burden on the school's resources. **This form will be sent to you either later today, or by lunchtime tomorrow (23.12.20), by email. The form will be sent from a non-More House School email address, so please look out for it. We expect to send a standard More House School email notification to alert you once the registration and consent form email has been dispatched. You may need to check your Junk email folder in case it is misinterpreted as junk mail by your email provider.**

I encourage you to use that form to register your son and to confirm your consent, and ask that you return this form as quickly as possible to support our administrative function in processing all staff and pupil returns within a very short working time-frame before the first day of term.

MORE HOUSE SCHOOL

Moons Hill, Frensham, Farnham, Surrey, GU10 3AP

T: 01252 792 303 E: schooloffice@morehouseschool.co.uk W: www.morehouseschool.co.uk

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Thank you for your support in this matter; I am sorry to ask this of you outside of school term-time and am grateful for the generous encouragement and goodwill given by pupils' parents.

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 18s, staff can oversee the swab process.

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

The UK Government has provided assurance that 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 pupil tests positive?

Participating staff and pupils who test positive will be informed about their results individually, and will be required to return home immediately. Pupils' 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). More House 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 or 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 pupil 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 pupils 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 or visiting <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>.

We will support our staff and pupils throughout, but please contact us if you have any questions. You can call the school office on 01252 792303 or email schooloffice@morehouseschool.co.uk.

More House needs volunteers!

Can you help us?

As mentioned in my letter of the 18th, we are seeking volunteers from amongst our parent-body and from staff-members' families. Such volunteers are essential for us to be able to operate our More House School testing station. Volunteers do not need to have any previous clinical training or experience. A quick and easy to complete, online training resource will be made available by the government for any such volunteers. We will also provide all necessary PPE (personal protective equipment).

At all times, our More House School testing station will be supervised by one of our in-house, Registered Nurses.

We intend to operate two full-day sessions in which we will test the entire student body from Year Seven upwards (pupils in the junior years are not eligible for these government-supplied tests at present) on each day. On those days – Wednesday, 6th and Monday 11th January – we will be operating a larger testing station than on other days, and need a larger number of volunteers. There will be morning and afternoon slots available on each of those days.

On all other days, from Thursday, 7th January onwards throughout the half-term and possibly beyond, we intend to operate a smaller testing station between 8am and approximately 10am only, plus an additional later shift from 10.30am until noon every Thursday, during which we will test one sixth of the staff each session, plus any staff or students requiring daily 7-day serial testing following close contact with a confirmed positive case. We will need parent volunteers to sign up for regular days to cover these early-morning slots.

If you can possibly assist us, please use the link immediately below to register your availability. Thank you so much for your strong support – on behalf of the whole school community, I thank you in advance for your support.

[RAPID TESTING VOLUNTEER REGISTRATION FORM](#)

Don't forget to register your consent for your son.

To aid the school's administrative team, please submit the online registration and consent form as soon as possible after you receive it (expected email delivery by lunchtime on 23.12.20). It does not take long to complete.

Thank you to all parents for your support as we navigate these new demands in a very short space of time. I wish you and your families a very happy Christmas holiday period together.

Yours sincerely,



Mr Jonathan Hetherington BA (Hons) MSc (Ed) QTS
Headmaster