

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

Dear Parents/Carers,

I am writing to update you further regarding the government announcement on mass COVID testing in schools made at the end of last week. The following information comes from a template letter provided to schools by the Department for Education to share information on how the testing will work in schools at the start of term in January. Although the testing is targeted at staff and secondary age pupils, I am sharing this information with all parents and carers across our schools to keep you all up-to-date together. I have also uploaded further information about the testing to the Glendale website in a new **January 2020** tab on the home page – I will be adding further information and guidance to this tab as I receive it over the Christmas and New Year period.

http://www.glendale.northumberland.sch.uk/website/january_2021/529734

We are still planning to open to all pupils on Wednesday 6th January 2021 when we will begin testing for staff and Year 7 & 8 pupils (subject to us receiving the required testing resources and having an appropriate team ready). This will also be dependent on further government decisions regarding schools opening which are uncertain at the time of writing this letter to you all. As you will see in the documentation on the website schools are being asked to provide the team to undertake testing using existing staff or volunteers. With all of our other COVID procedures in place alongside normal teaching and learning activities, we do not have the staff capacity to fill all of the roles we are being told are needed for testing. Below is an overview of the roles we are being told are needed:



Workforce Profiles

Schools and colleges will need to consider the following roles. More than one role can be taken on by one person.



Quality Lead/ Team Leader

Responsible for the overall on-site operations at the test site, including day-to-day workforce management. Ensure quality assurance, incidents, risks mitigation across the testing service

Test Assistant

Provides guidance and supervision to subjects on swabbing as requested. Collects completed swabs and pass them to the Processing Operatives. Ensures cleaning of swabbing bays.

Processor

Prepares test sample for analysis, conducts processing of LFT and interprets result. Provides results to Results Recorder. Ensures cleaning of processing bays.

COVID-19 Coordinator

Sign-off and schedules testing activities; ensuring communications and consents are actioned; management of positive cases as per school guidelines.

Registration Assistant

Responsible for ensuring subjects have registered and distributing test kits on arrival. Ensures orderly entry of subjects onto the testing site.

Results Recorder

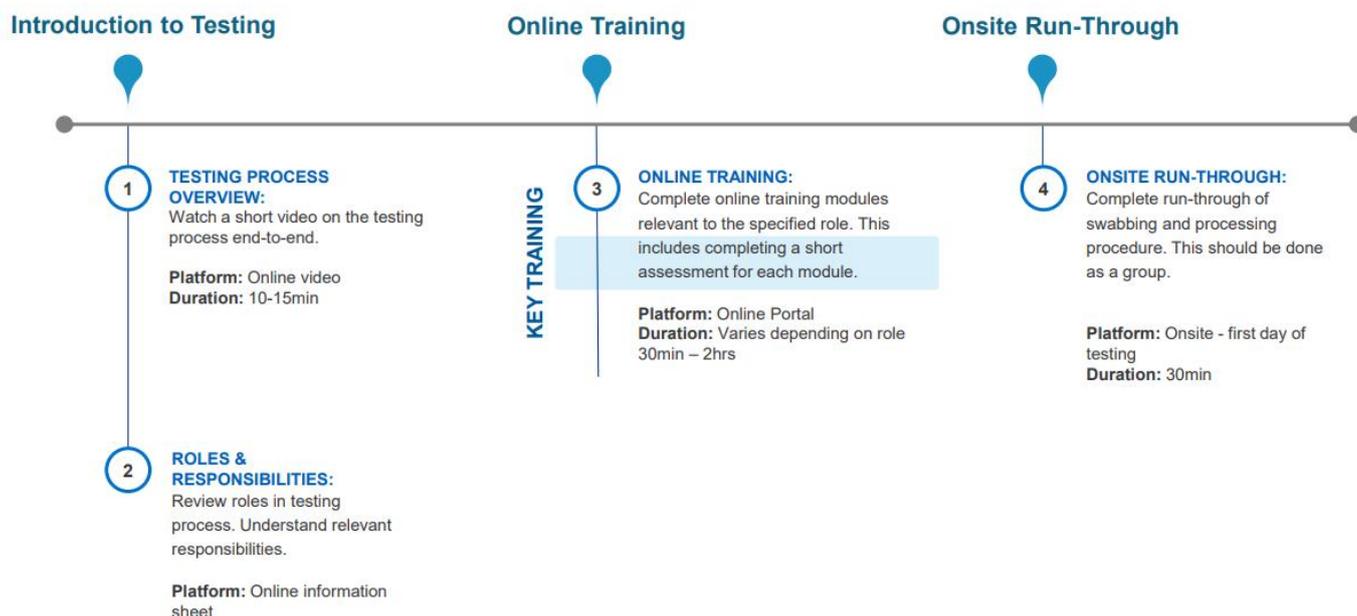
Collates results from Processing Operatives and uploads to digital solution

Cleaner

Cleans the testing bays, and ensures waste is correctly disposed of, including working with clinical waste provider to dispose of clinical waste

The government have indicated that training for these roles will be provided and will be undertaken individually online (taking around 2 to 3 hours) followed by an onsite run-through working as a group.

Training Available



Can you help?

If we are to be successful in setting up and running the testing systems, we will need help. At this time, I am asking for expressions of interest from parents, carers and community volunteers who feel that they could become part of our school testing team. This would involve undertaking the training and volunteering for a couple of hours in the morning on school days next term. If you are currently furloughed or know that you will have the time to commit to this for at least the first couple of months of 2021 please let me know via the email below. Please also consider your own vulnerability/health risks as well as those of anyone in your current bubble before expressing your interest in helping. At this point in time, until further information is given by the government, you would not be making a firm commitment to volunteering that would come later once we know more.

If you feel that you could help please send me a message expressing your interest to the email address below with the subject line 'COVID Test Volunteer' – please include your full name and a phone number that you are happy to be contacted on in due course. At this point I will start to collate a list of possible volunteers and I will make contact directly with individuals in the New Year (this will probably be on Monday 4th January 2021). Volunteers will also need to be available for training on Tuesday 5th January 2021.

mrdeanehall@gmail.com

Apologies for this rather long letter just before Christmas but there is limited time in the coming days to get all of this up and running ready for the start of the new term.

Keep safe & Happy Christmas

Mr Deane-Hall

Two forms attached for Year 7 & Year 8 only: **Registration form** & **COVID testing consent form**.

DfE template letter:

We are working to keep our schools as safe as possible. 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 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 would encourage everyone to take it.

We will be testing all staff and secondary school age pupils (children in Year 7 and Year 8) who want to participate from week commencing 4 January 2021.

I enclose an instructional leaflet with some more information – this leaflet is also on the Glendale school website.

Parents/Carers of pupils in Year 7 & Year 8. If you are happy for your child to be tested, please fill in the registration form attached and return it via email to my Christmas COVID email address before Thursday 31st December 2020. A completed and signed consent statement (one per pupil – also attached) will be required to be brought into school on the first day of the January term

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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 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.

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 pupil tests positive?

Participating staff and pupils 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.

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). 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 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/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/college] 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/college] 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 pupils throughout, but please contact us if you need this information in any other language or format or if you have any questions. You can email me at **mrdeanehall@gmail.com**

Yours faithfully,