

7 January 2021

Dear parents and carers

## COVID-19 testing in school

During the challenging times of the pandemic, we continue to do all we can to keep everyone at school safe.

You may have heard in the news over Christmas that testing for those **without** coronavirus symptoms is being introduced in schools across the country using new '**lateral flow tests**'.

We would like to test those students who are in school starting tomorrow, and this letter gives you more detail about why we want to do this and how it will be done if you agree to your child being tested.

The tests will be supervised by trained school staff and there will be minimal disruption to lessons. The tests are quick and easy to do using a swab of the nose and throat. Your child will complete their own swabbing. Results are available within 30 minutes, if your child tests positive we will contact you and your child immediately. If your child tests negative we will contact you and your child by the end of the day. Please make sure you have given us your correct contact details.

In addition, students who are identified as close contacts of someone testing positive, will be offered daily testing to avoid them having to self-isolate.

These tests sit alongside all our other measures in school such as mask wearing, hand sanitising, hand washing and social distancing in lessons.

These tests are voluntary but we do need parental consent before we can do the test. I would encourage everyone to take it as it will help us to beat the virus. As an example of our collective effort to do this, all staff at the school have agreed to and have taken the test, and will continue doing so on a weekly basis.

Please find additional information about the testing on the next page of this letter. *If you are happy for your child to be tested, please fill in the enclosed consent form and return it to school tomorrow.* If you do not want your child to be tested, please do not fill in the consent form and you do not need to contact us. Students will only be tested if they produce a completed consent form.

If you have any queries or concerns, or need support in any way, please do not hesitate to contact the school (clareh@lowtonhs.wigan.sch.uk).

Yours faithfully

**Kieran Larkin**  
Headteacher

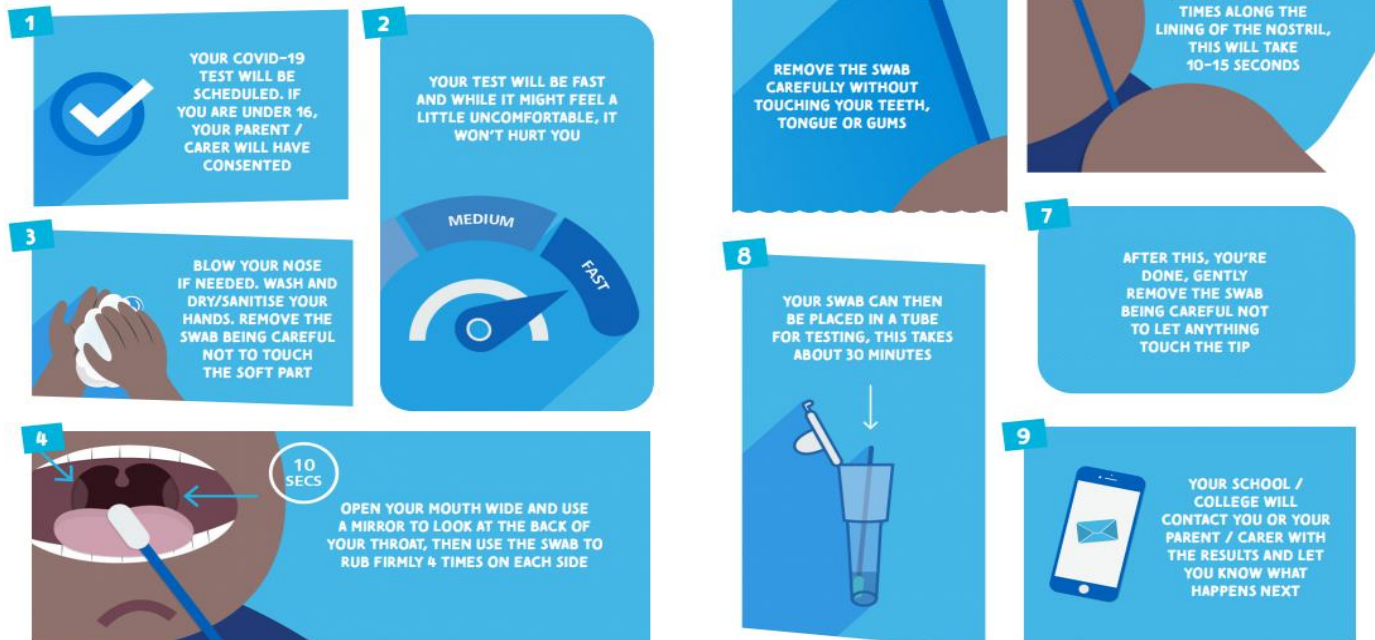
## CARING, LEARNING AND SUCCEEDING

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:



### HOW TO DO YOUR TEST

WHILE THIS IS A SELF-SWAB TEST, THERE WILL BE A TESTING HELPER WHO WILL OVERSEE THINGS AND PROVIDE HELP IF YOU NEED



### Do these tests work?

Studies by Oxford University and Public Health England showed them to be as accurate as a PCR test. The tests have lower sensitivity, but are better at picking up cases where a person has a higher viral load.

### What if a student tests positive?

Participating students who test positive will be informed about their results individually. Students will then need to take a 'PCR test' (similar to those done in local and regional testing sites) ideally on the same day. The school will provide the PCR test kits to perform at home or you can go to [www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test](https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test) or call 119 to book a follow-up test. If ordering a PCR test yourselves, it is best to visit a drive-through test site as it is faster than requesting a home test. During this time while students wait for the PCR result (via text/email), they will need to self-isolate. If the PCR test returns a positive result, students will have to self-isolate and follow the guidance from NHS Test and Trace.

### What happens if the test is negative?

Students will be able to stay in school and resume their activities as normal and we will contact you and your child with the result by the end of the day. 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 or visiting <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>.