

Our Lady's Catholic College

Learn, live, love together in a caring Catholic community



February 2021

Dear Parent or guardian,

You will have heard that from 8 March all children and students should return to school or college and attendance will be mandatory once again from this date. We are still making plans and arrangements for the return and testing of pupils. We will send a further letter to inform you what day your child is expected to return to school but most pupils will NOT start back on 8 March and there will be a staggered return to allow school time to complete the testing of pupils whose parents wish them to be tested.

The government has stated that secondary aged pupils should take part in asymptomatic testing upon their return in the week of 8 March. Pupils can return to school or college following their first negative test result. Pupils not undergoing testing should attend school in line with the school's phased return arrangements. If you are a parent of a child that is vulnerable or if you are a critical worker, your child should continue to be able to attend school throughout, unless they receive a positive test result.

Testing is voluntary and your child will not be tested unless they (if they are aged over 18) or you (or another parent/carer) have given informed consent. We strongly encourage you and your child to take part, to help us break chains of transmission and manage the virus. Your child will **not** be stopped from returning to school or college if you or they choose not to be tested or are not able to undertake a test, and will return to face-to-face education in line with their school or college's arrangements.

Along with the other protective measures we are taking, these tests will help staff and students 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.

If you are happy for your child to be tested, please fill in the digital form that has been emailed to all parents. **If you have already completed the consent form when it was sent out previously you do not need to complete it again.**

Please only complete the form if you do consent. This is the link to the form:
<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=D2B-Sq3IDUGRNJHhui-GpBRRhXA3P1dHIIJcaiWd8QJURTU5SIIYVUpIMkpVQVROVk9LMEhFSjM4TC4u>

We will not test any student without both theirs and their parents' consent so if you do not consent you do not need to do anything – no test will be undertaken unless the electronic form is completed.

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

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from testing) will be shared by text from NHS Track and Trace.

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.

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 return to 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 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 queries to schoolclosure@olcc.lancs.sch.uk.

I will send another letter with details of what dates each year group will be returning to school. We are looking forward to seeing all our pupils and the joys of face to face lessons.

Yours faithfully,

Helen Seddon
Headteacher



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