

26/02/21

Dear Parent / Carer

### **Lateral Flow Tests for students**

We wrote to you prior to Christmas and explained that Immanuel College was looking at the possibility and practicality of rolling out testing for students and staff for COVID 19. following the government announcement I am pleased to now confirm that students will be offered 3 lateral flow tests (each test will be spaced 3-5 days apart) when they return to school from the week beginning 8<sup>th</sup> March, we are in a position to start to roll out testing from 8<sup>th</sup> March.

### **Why are we testing?**

We know that a large proportion of people with COVID-19 have no visible symptoms. This means that they could have the illness and be passing it unknowingly to others. The purpose of these tests is to identify staff and students who are asymptomatic quickly before it is spread and provide the experience of self-administering these tests under trained staff supervision prior to being allocated home testing kits as per the current government proposals.

### **How will the test work?**

The test involves one simple swab which is self-administered – placed first in your mouth and then inside your nostril. Tests are then processed within school and results are usually available in 30 minutes, test results will provide either a positive, negative or inconclusive result. If your test is inconclusive, we will normally carry out a further test on the same day so that you have a definite answer.

### **Who will be tested?**

Coronavirus (COVID-19) asymptomatic testing in schools using Lateral Flow Devices (LFD)s will support the return to face-to face education by helping to identify people who are infectious but do not have any coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms. For secondary school staff and students we are moving to a home testing model (for students, following the first 3 onsite tests). The lateral flow devices used have received regulatory approval from the MHRA for self use. Once students have been tested 3 times at school, they will be provided with home test kits for regular home testing. Testing remains voluntary but strongly encouraged.

### **How reliable are tests?**

I am sure that many of you will be aware, from media sources, that the Lateral Flow Tests (LFTs) we will be using are not as accurate as the “gold-standard” PCR tests used by dedicated Covid-19 testing centres. Assuming the LFTs are administered carefully, they will usually detect cases where people have a high viral load but might be asymptomatic. Anyone who receives a positive LFT test result will be required to schedule a PCR test to confirm their result.

### **When will I find out my result?**

Although the DFE guidance only requires schools to confirm positive results to school staff and students, our intention is to ensure all students or staff who are tested receive a definitive result on the same day where at all possible. This is because we know worrying about test results can cause a lot of anxiety and we want to reduce this concern. In the majority of cases we expect the individual will be able to wait in a safe area in school or near the testing centre and be informed of the results after 30 minutes.

### **What will the experience be like?**

Obviously the test is quite invasive which means most people will find it unpleasant. You do have to place a swab up your nose and in your mouth to get an accurate result. It doesn't hurt however our staff have been trained to support your child/ren with the process. We will be seeking to make the experience as pleasant as possible. Testing remains a small inconvenience to go through to know students are protecting themselves, their friends in school and your family bubble.

### **What do I need to do now?**

You will have received a standard Government consent form with this letter. You or your child now need to sign this depending on their age. The consent form also refers to a privacy notice about how we will store and use test data – this can be found on the school website at: [www.immanuelcollege.net](http://www.immanuelcollege.net)

Completed consent forms need to be returned by e-mail to [testing@immanuelcollege.net](mailto:testing@immanuelcollege.net) by **Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> March**. If you are having difficulties submitting this form please can you contact the school reception in 01274 425900

**What happens if I don't consent?**

Testing remains optional. You don't have to consent to testing although we **would strongly encourage you to do so** as we believe it will help the national effort to reduce virus transmission and ultimately keep our children, families and staff safer. If you or your child do not consent to testing, then they will return, once the consenting members of the year group have undertaken their first test. This date will be communicated to you by the school.

We hope this letter helps to answer some of your questions and provide some reassurance about the process we are undertaking. If you have concerns or further queries, please do contact school and we will be happy to talk these through with you.

With best wishes

Immanuel College