



# Atlantic Academy Portland

an Aspirations Academy

Miss Heppell - Principal of Primary  
Mrs Bishop - Principal of Secondary

Maritime House  
Southwell Business Park  
Portland, Dorset. DT5 2NA

Tel: 01305 820262  
Email: [Office@atlantic-aspirations.org](mailto:Office@atlantic-aspirations.org)

[www.atlantic-aspirations.org](http://www.atlantic-aspirations.org)

4th January 2021

Dear Parent/Carer,

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

The content of this letter has been sent to all schools by the Department for Education. It concerns the national testing programme that it is hoped will enable students and staff to return to school safely this term. I hope you find the information useful.

We are working to keep our school 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 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 spreading and help to keep our school open as safely as possible. The test is voluntary, but I would encourage everyone to take it and we would like to test all staff and students

We will start phased testing for all staff and students who want to participate from week commencing **4th January 2021**. If you are happy for your child to be tested, **please fill in the Google Form; the link is at the bottom of this letter - one per child**. If you are unable to access this form digitally, then we can supply a hard copy version for you if you contact the Main Office on **Tuesday 5th January**. Those taking the test will be supervised by trained staff.

### Lateral Flow tests

- The 'lateral flow' tests are quick and easy using a swab of your nose and throat. For under 18s, staff will oversee the swab process.
- Results (which take around half an hour from testing) will be shared directly with staff and students participating.
- Where participants are under 16, parents or legal guardians will also be informed.
- We have been advised 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.

### What if a student tests positive?

- Participating staff and students 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.
- Students 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).
- Schools will be able to provide these **PCR test kits to perform at home**, or you can go to **[www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test](http://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.
- While they 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.



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## What happens if the test is negative?

The student will be able to stay in school and resume their activities as normal. A student 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 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 being 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 (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 format or if you have any questions. You can call the office on **01305 820262** or email **[zfowler@atlantic-aspirations.org](mailto:zfowler@atlantic-aspirations.org)**.

## Registration and Consent

To process the test, we will register all participating students but we will need **parental consent** for children under 16. Please fill in the [Registration & Consent Google Form here](#)

Yours sincerely

Mrs L Bishop  
Principal of Secondary