



16.09.2020

Dear Parents,

You will be aware that COVID-19 testing capacity in England is limited at the moment, this shortage of testing availability is due to limited capacity in laboratories responsible for processing tests. As a result, we are limiting the number of testing appointments available locally, in order to avoid overwhelming the current laboratory capacity and creating a situation where samples have to be discarded because these are not processed for results within appropriate timescales.

It is crucial for all to book their tests ahead of time to allow the testing centres to ensure the number of testing slots matches the number of tests the laboratories can process and avoid any unnecessary distress caused by insufficient capacity.

Who should get a test and who should not

- Do seek testing if you have symptoms, which are; a new continuous cough, a temperature or a loss of or change in taste or smell
- Do not seek testing if you have no symptoms
- If you are a contact of someone who has tested positive but do not have symptoms, please don't get a test unless you develop symptoms. If you were to test negative, it does not mean you can leave isolation earlier if you are a contact, as the virus can take up to 14 days to develop. The 14 day self-isolation period has to be observed
- Do book a slot for a test in advance
- Do not just turn up at a testing site. New slots get released each evening and again in the morning. We are assured by central government that they are working on expanding lab capacity

We have also had reports of increased attendances at A & E from members of the public seeking testing. A & E should only be used in a medical emergency. Please do not visit A & E for a test. Likewise, please only contact your GP if you require medical assistance, your GP will not provide you with a test.

We understand that this is disruptive to students, parents and staff, and indeed the wider population and we are assured by central government that they are working on a solution.

In the meantime, it remains important to wash your hands regularly and thoroughly, to wear face coverings in enclosed spaces and communal areas and to keep 2 metres apart wherever possible. These measures will help to prevent onward transmission of the virus.

Yours sincerely,

Lucy Wightman
Director of Public Health