

FEBRUARY 2021

COVID-19 REGULAR TESTING OF SECONDARY STUDENTS

Dear Parent or Carer

Following the latest Government announcement, you will be aware that secondary school students will be returning to school as part of a phased return between the 8th and 15th March. This return will be staggered to allow students to undergo COVID-19 tests prior to their return. The Government has stated that those students who enrol for testing should undertake three assisted tests at an Asymptomatic Testing Site (ATS), spaced at three to five-day intervals, prior to being issued with kits for twice weekly home testing.

ECC endorses this regular testing approach, in order to reduce the risk of transmission of the virus and to ensure that students' education is not further disrupted. The first of the three tests is to reduce the risk of any students who have unknowingly contracted the virus from transmitting it in the school community. The remaining assisted tests are to ensure that students have fully familiarised themselves with the testing process, prior to moving to home testing.

ECC is making testing capacity at our community sites available throughout the county, so that secondary students can have their first assisted test before they return to school. This will reduce the risk of transmission of the virus into schools, particularly where children and young people access public/school transport.

Following the initial community test, students will be offered two more assisted tests in their school.

We are writing to you because your child/ren's school has opted into the community testing approach for the first assisted test. I therefore encourage you to arrange a COVID-19 test for your child/ren at one of our local lateral flow testing sites, before they return to school. In partnership with the Department for Health and Social Care, we are increasing the number of testing centres local to you for this purpose.

We have prioritised access to these sites for years 10 - 13 between 4th – 7th March, so that they are able to return to school on 8th March and have uninterrupted education as soon as possible.

Years 7 - 9 are able to access a test from 11th – 14th March, to return to school on 15th March

Accessing a Test

A lateral flow test (LFT) allows people who have no symptoms to find out if they are infected. It's a rapid test and you can get a result within 20-30 minutes. You can book an appointment online at www.essex.gov.uk/getting-tested or by calling 0333 772 6144.

Please note these tests are for those who are not displaying any symptoms of COVID-19. If you are showing signs of symptoms please book a test here: www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test. Please do not get a test if you have had a positive test in the last 90 days, as it may give an incorrect positive result.

Following the Test

If a test result is positive the individual and the rest of the household must self-isolate and you should inform your school/college straight away.

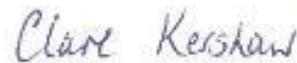
If the test result is negative, the individual does not need to self-isolate or take any further action. They should continue to practice social distancing and good hand hygiene in-line with the national guidance.

Thank you for your support in helping us to prevent the spread of COVID-19 during these difficult times.

With best wishes



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