



St Joseph's Roman Catholic High School

Chorley New Road | Horwich | Bolton | BL6 6HW

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Headteacher: Mr T McCabe | **Deputy Headteachers:** Mrs J Morgan, Mrs N Yorke Robinson | **Chair of Governors:** Mrs P Jones
Registered Charity Number: 1075795 | **Facebook:** St Joseph's R.C. High School **Twitter:** @joeys_rchs **Instagram:** joeys_rchs

25th February 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

Welcome Back! We are looking forward to welcoming students back into school starting on Monday 8th March. As requested by the government we have put into place a plan to test consenting staff and students to make our school opening as safe as it can be. This involves testing students at St Anthony's (our asymptomatic test site) once (on the school day prior to coming into school) and then twice more in the first fortnight of school (3-5 days apart). As you can imagine the planning and logistics behind this are complex so please bear with us. The details are outlined in this letter. Apologies in advance for the lengthy nature.

What if we don't want a test? Testing is voluntary but when talking to your child please remind them that testing is a selfless act. The overwhelming evidence is that the risk to children and young people from coronavirus (COVID-19) is low, however, the risk to adults as we know, is still significant, especially if they have underlying needs. Please note that school staff have not been prioritised for vaccinations and whilst some staff have been vaccinated due to their age or a known condition, the majority of staff at St Joseph's have not been vaccinated. Giving consent for testing is a way to support others and do our bit to help stop the spread of the virus and could help prevent a possible fatal condition in an adult member of our community. If an untested student unknowingly brings the virus into school and subsequently develops symptoms and tests positive we will then be forced to track and trace and ask bubbles/year groups to isolate for a further 10 days. Mass testing is a logistical challenge for school and might be unpleasant for a child but a small price to pay to keep others safe or prevent a fatality within our community.

Consent for testing: If you are happy for your child to be tested, please fill in the form on the following link:

https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=sHAoOFETq0ONO_0qvTFzyi7Eux8QJv5CpxL FK9r_r2RUN1E5REVJUDdSUjJYM0s1TUdPMVg2WlQ5Sy4u (one per student/staff.) Those taking the test will be supervised by trained staff. The 'lateral flow' tests are quick and easy using a swab of the nose and throat. 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. Testing will be offered free of charge.

What if a student tests positive? Participating staff and students who test positive will be informed about their results individually. Guidance on safe travel and additional precautions will be provided along with test results.

What happens if the test is negative? They will be able to return to school/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. This is uncommon but nothing to worry about. There is a temptation for students to feel invincible after a negative test. Please tell your child that this isn't a mandate to relax other Covid-safe measures. It is only valid the moment the test is taken and students



could develop symptoms later. This is why we are advised to test three times in the space of two weeks.

What if a close contact at school tests positive? A close contact of someone in school/college who has tested positive for COVID-19 will need to self-isolate as per the national guidelines. Further details will be provided at the time.

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 or visiting <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>.

We will support our staff and students throughout, but please contact us if you need this information in any other language or format or if you have any questions.

Testing and return to school Schedule: *You will be required to book an appointment for the first test. Please visit SchoolCloud - St Joseph's RC School Horwich and book in one of the testing bays. Please note that you will need your 'login code.' You can find this in a document uploaded to Epraise and is the same parent login used for parent evenings.*

Year 11 will be invited to St Anthony's for a LfD test on Friday 5th March so that Year 11 can return on Monday 8th March.

Year 10 will be invited to St Anthony's for a LfD test on Monday 8th March so that Year 10 can return on Tuesday 9th March.

Year 7 will be invited to St Anthony's for a LfD test on Tuesday 9th March so that Year 7 can return on Wednesday 10th March.

Year 8 will be invited to St Anthony's for a LfD test on Wednesday 10th March so that Year 8 can return on Thursday 11th March.

Year 9 will be invited to St Anthony's for a LfD test on Thursday 11th March so that Year 9 can return on Friday 12th March.

The order of year groups is based on government recommendation that students closest to their GCSE year are admitted first followed by Y7&8 who are most vulnerable at home due to their age and also due to the fact that they have not yet experienced a full year at secondary school.

Second and third tests: Each student will receive a 2nd and third test 3-5 days apart within the first fortnight. There is no need to book for this. We will take students from lesson and test students on site within this time frame.

Home testing kits: We will then hand out home testing kits supplied by the DfE and issue instructions on how to use these. You don't need to provide specific consent for home tests but if students collect and open a home test they are consenting to carry out the test and it is a legal requirement to report the results. The government have said that three tests in school are a prerequisite for home testing permission.

Safety measures in School: Please note that our risk assessment is being updated in line with the most recent government guidelines and will be uploaded to the letters section of our website. When students arrive for their testing appointment they must queue in a socially distant way. There are markers on the floor indicating where students should stand to wait in the porch area at St Anthony's.



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A one way system is in operational, using the door closest to Chorley New Road as an entrance and unfortunately (to reduce infection risk) we can't allow parent/carers into the building.

On return to school we will be asking students to follow one way systems, wear masks in classrooms and on corridors and keep 2 meters apart whenever possible. We will be sanitising work stations and canteen tables between use. In line with government guidance we ask that mobile phones are not taken out during the school day. To help us focus on COVID safety and learning we also ask that you ensure that your child is wearing the correct uniform, removes piercings before they leave home and does not have false nails etc. We will allow students to wear coats if it is particularly draughty near an open window but we ask that you don't allow your child to come to school in a hoodie. Our school bus services will run as usual. On return to school we ask that students who have borrowed a school lap top during lockdown return their laptop/case/charger etc... to the pastoral office as they arrive. This is really important so that we can resource the curriculum while students are in school.

Key worker students: We have had over 100 students accessing our key worker/vulnerable student provision throughout lockdown who have been regularly tested each week. From Monday 8th March these students will go to their normal timetabled room where they will join the 'live version' of the live stream lesson. There will be no live stream lessons on the day allocated for testing for each year group but there will be learning activities for scheduled subjects uploaded to epraise/TEAMS.

Keep up high levels of engagement. We would request that, in the meantime, students continue their high levels of on-line engagement in lessons, please reinforce this message. We continue to cover the curriculum and carry out assessments and do not want any students to be disadvantaged by any lack of engagement. It will be extremely helpful to their own future successes if they can keep up their efforts and continue to make good progress over any remaining days of home-learning. On Tuesday 9th March Y7-9 will be receiving special learning activities based around lifelong learning to supplement the normal curriculum.

I appreciate that there is a lot of information in this letter but we have tried to cover all bases. Please see the attached flier and FAQ regarding the use of data within LFD testing. We have a challenging few weeks ahead as we settle young people safely back into some sort of normality, but it will be worth it and I know that together we can do it successfully and safely. Thank you for all your support during this time. We are blessed to have such a supportive parent/carer community.

Take Care and God Bless!

Mr T McCabe

