

1/3/2021

NHS Test and Trace: COVID-19 Testing for Staff and Students

Dear College Community,

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 devices'. This letter is to help give you more information about the testing programme in our College

Along with the other protective measures we are taking, testing will allow us to take further measures to help all members of the College community who are required to attend in person. Up to one third of people who have coronavirus are asymptomatic. By testing, we will help to reduce the spread in the College through asymptomatic transmission. We are therefore strongly encouraging those attending Kendal College sites to be tested.

Testing is voluntary, and students not wishing to take the test are still entitled to attend the College provided that all other health and safety controls are adhered to, for example the wearing of face coverings, social distancing, and frequent hand washing.

The Testing Programme

Following on from the initial testing of students and staff from the beginning of January, the College will be offering three initial tests to 16-18 year old students (and full time groups aged 19+) from the 8th March. Part time and Higher Education students, and apprentices, will be offered testing on an individual basis. These tests will be taken 3-5 days apart, and will then switch to home testing twice weekly. Staff will be offered twice weekly home testing from the 8th March.

How the tests work

Those taking the test will be supervised by trained College staff and volunteers. The lateral flow device tests are quick and easy to undertake, using a swab of the nose and throat. Results (which take around half an hour from testing) will be shared directly with the individual participant. Where participants are under 16, parents or legal guardians will also be informed. You will also receive a text/email notification of a positive or negative result from the online NHS system. Tests are free of charge.

What if someone tests positive?

If someone tests positive on a lateral flow device test, they will be informed immediately by the College and will need to take a further 'PCR test' to confirm the result. This should be on the same day or as soon as possible afterwards. The College will provide these PCR test kits to perform at home. **The person with the positive test will need to return home, which means students will not be able to sit an exam they may have attended the College to complete, and staff who feel able / well should continue to work at home.**

During this time while they wait for the PCR result (via text/email) they will need to self-isolate.

If the PCR test returns a positive result they will have to continue to self-isolate and follow the guidance from NHS Test and Trace.

What happens if the test is negative?

While a small number of participants may need to repeat the test if the first test was invalid or void for some reason, participants who test negative will be able to stay in Kendal College and resume their activities as normal. Participants will be informed of negative test results via text/email. Where participants are under 16, parents or legal guardians will also be informed.

What if staff or students have been in close contact with someone in Kendal College who tests positive?

The staff member or student will be notified that they are a close contact by the College. If close contacts agree to be tested each day for a maximum period of 7 days, and they test negative every time, they will be allowed to remain in Kendal College that day. There may be instances where close contacts are also contacted by NHS Test and Trace. In this instance they should notify NHS Test and Trace that they are a close contact through the College and are participating in daily contact testing (also known as 'serial testing').

If they do not want to take the tests, they will need to self-isolate in line with the national guidelines. The option of daily testing does not apply to household members or close contacts of a positive case outside of College, who will still need to self-isolate.

What if they develop symptoms?

This testing programme at Kendal College is for people with no symptoms. If anyone 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 have any questions. You can call the College on 01539 814790, or email phil.dudley@kendal.ac.uk