

28th June 2021

To Parent / Carer



COVID-19 Surge Testing in Secondary Schools in Cumbria Information and Request for Consent

Dear Parent / Carer

Cumbria County Council and NHS Test and Trace are asking every person living and working in Cumbria between the ages of 12 and 30 to get a PCR test for COVID-19, even if they do not have symptoms.

This is because infections have risen sharply in Cumbria over recent weeks – particularly among younger age groups.

We have been asked to work with Cumbria County Council to manage the testing of school-aged children whilst they are at school.

A Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) test will be conducted. This is different to the tests that pupils have been using at home because the sample is sent to a laboratory to be processed. A PCR test is more sensitive and can also be analysed to show which variant of COVID-19 is present in positive samples.

Your child would NOT need to isolate whilst waiting for their test result.

Testing is likely to take place at school from Wednesday 30th June. The test involves your child taking a swab of their own throat and nose just as they have been doing since March for their home tests. All testing will be supervised. Unlike last time, students will need to register their test prior to completing the test using their iPad or mobile phone – please could you ensure your daughter / son knows which mobile phone number the test result should be returned to. Also, unlike last time, the testing will take place in your child's normal classrooms, which will be wiped down with antiseptic wipes following the testing process.

As your child is under the age of 16, we require your consent for them to take a PCR test at school. Please read the attached 'Frequently Asked Questions' sheet and privacy statement. If you have any questions, please contact the school contactus.wla@westlakesmat.org.uk Please then complete the consent form on edulink by Wednesday morning if you are happy for your child to have a PCR test at the academy.

Thank you for your ongoing support in helping us to manage COVID-19 within school and our wider community.

Yours sincerely

James Jackson
Principal
West Lakes Academy

Principal: James Jackson
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COVID-19 PCR Surge Testing in Secondary Schools

Frequently Asked Questions

Why are you surge testing in school?

Introducing surge testing is a public health decision based on a range of factors including the presence of a particular variant in an area, the likelihood of onward transmission, and which age-groups in particular are getting infected.

In Cumbria:

- Rates have been rising exponentially over the last 2 weeks.
- Vaccination coverage is not complete.
- There are increasingly young people more vulnerable.
- There is a possibility of NHS capacity becoming overwhelmed in a peak situation in July/August if no mitigations in place.

By testing secondary school children now, we can hopefully identify individuals who need to be isolating and stop further increases in cases, which could lead to more vulnerable people being infected and becoming very ill.

Does my child have to have a PCR test?

No, it is up to you in discussion with your child to decide whether or not they have a test. We strongly advise your child to be tested, however if you do not want them to be tested, there is no need to return the consent form.

My child has already tested positive for COVID-19 through a PCR test during the past 90 days – do they need another test?

No, they should only get a PCR test during the 90-day period if they develop new symptoms of COVID-19.

I thought PCR tests were for people with COVID-19 symptoms? Why is Public Health asking people without symptoms to get a PCR test?

People with symptoms of COVID-19 are always advised to get a PCR test. Sometimes Public Health will recommend people without symptoms get a PCR test when they see a very rapid rise in the number of people testing positive for COVID-19. This is because PCR tests are very sensitive and can detect COVID-19 in people who don't realise they have it (because they don't have symptoms, have different illness symptoms or are not showing symptoms yet).

A positive PCR test can also be processed in a laboratory to see which variant of COVID-19 has been detected. This is important when there are concerns about the variant circulating in a community (especially if it is very easy to pass on to other people – like the Delta variant that we are now seeing in Cumbria).

How will the test be carried out?

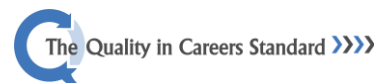
Your child will be asked to take a swab of their own tonsils (or area where the tonsils would have been) and nose. The process for taking the sample is the same as when completing a Lateral Flow Test (LFT), which many secondary school children have already been doing at home. Because children now know what to expect, they will be asked to test in groups to minimise disruption to lessons. As the sample is sent off, they will also need to self-register on the NHS website.

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Does my child need to isolate whilst waiting for the test result?

No, they do not need to isolate whilst waiting for the test result.

How will I be informed of the result of the test?

When your daughter / son registers their test, they will be asked to provide a mobile phone number. The test result will be texted to you via the details provided.

The academy will also receive the test result via secure email.

What if the test result is positive?

Your child and other members of their household will need to isolate (stay at home) for 10 full days from the date of the positive test result. We will also provide you with further information to support you during the stay at home period.

What if the test result is negative?

You do not need to do anything else. Continue to follow COVID-safe advice such as 'Hands, Face, Space and Fresh Air'. We also recommend anyone in your household aged 12+ continue to test at home twice a week with 'self-test' kits (also known as Lateral Flow Devices/Tests).

What if the test result is inconclusive?

Your child will need to get another PCR test and should do this by being taken to a local test site. You can also order a home test kit. Call 119 if you do not have internet access. Your child will not need to isolate whilst waiting for the result.

How will my child's data be used?

Please read the privacy notice that will be sent out at the same time as this sheet.

I have other questions – who should I contact?

Please contact the school on contactus.wla@westlakesmat.org.uk

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