

# Hampshire and Isle of Wight COVID-19 Saliva Testing Programme



Dear parent or guardian,

We are pleased to inform you that Saint George Catholic College is taking part in the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Saliva Testing Programme starting W/C Monday 8<sup>th</sup> November 2021 available for all students and staff.

The programme offers an accurate early screening method to identify asymptomatic cases of COVID-19 using saliva testing. It is an easy and non-invasive test, which is performed at home and dropped off at the educational setting on the same day.

Test samples are processed in a new purpose-built local laboratory in Southampton, which uses a technique known as loop-mediated isothermal amplification (*LAMP*) to provide reliable results within 24-48 hours.

Due to the high sensitivity levels of LAMP saliva testing, there is no need for participants to undertake a confirmatory PCR test following a positive result. Free saliva tests will be offered to all of our students, staff and contractors.

## **Why is this important?**

We hope you are as enthusiastic as we are about participating in saliva testing. Knowing who has the virus is vital to stopping its spread. Alongside other measures that we are taking to minimise the impact of the virus, saliva testing will help us to reduce disruptions to education. This will help us to safely keep as many students and staff in the classroom as possible.

The Hampshire and Isle of Wight Saliva Testing Programme is a pathfinder programme for the Department for Health and Social Care. Your son/daughter's participation will shape the way in which this innovative method of testing may be rolled out nationally. The testing will also contribute to important research into COVID-19 and any new variants. Participation is strongly encouraged.

## **When will saliva testing begin?**

Your son/daughter will be able to participate from the week beginning Monday 8<sup>th</sup> November 2021. **The collection day for all students' samples are every Tuesday For staff every Thursday.**

## **How will we support your son/daughter with testing?**

Through the programme, we have been given access to a series of short lessons to be delivered to students in tutor time. This explains the test to them and the benefits to us all of continued testing. Class teachers will regularly remind students about testing days.

There is additional guidance available via [www.hiowsalivates.nhs.uk](http://www.hiowsalivates.nhs.uk). This includes demonstration videos, animations on how to provide a sample, instructions in alternative languages and further support.

Students will be provided with saliva collection kits to take home prior to the first collection date. Each student will be provided with enough sample kits to last for 8 weeks.

Each kit includes an instruction leaflet explaining how to provide a saliva sample. Please ensure that they follow each step of the instructions and that samples are packaged correctly, to gain a result.

Additionally, students will be provided with a sheet of barcode labels. This sheet contains 32 labels and should be stored safely, as they allow the laboratory to correctly identify who a sample belongs to. As your son/daughter nears the end of the sheet of barcode labels, a new set will be printed automatically. If the barcode labels are lost, then you should phone the Enquiries Team on: 0808 1962 282 to request a new set of labels. Please note that students **must** apply their **unique barcode lengthways, directly on the tube**.

Your son/daughter will need to bring their sample in for collection. If they forget to bring in their sample, they should bring it in for the next scheduled collection date. The samples will be processed on the same day. You will receive a text message with their result within 24-48 hours.

If your son/daughter tests positive, please follow the most up to date COVID-19 self-isolation government guidance. You will be contacted within 24 hours by a healthcare professional, who will offer advice and support.

## **What if my son/daughter develops symptoms?**

If they develop COVID-19 symptoms, they should **not** take a saliva test. They should self-isolate pending a PCR test.

The aim of the programme is to offer weekly saliva testing to participants who are **not** showing symptoms of the virus but could be infectious. Testing methods must not be used interchangeably for symptomatic and asymptomatic cases. The levels of sensitivity for the various sample sites (*saliva, throat/nose swab*) differ, with PCR regarded as the gold standard. LFD and saliva LAMP tests are therefore currently recommended for use as screening tests in people without symptoms.

I would urge all students to take part in saliva testing. Knowing who has COVID-19 is vital to stopping its spread. Regular saliva testing will help us to keep our community safe and minimise disruptions to our students' education.

## **Important information about your data**

Please carefully [read our privacy notice](#) included within this letter to find out how we will use and protect your personal information. We will only process personal information in compliance with Data Protection Legislation. **Please email me at [head@stgcc.co.uk](mailto:head@stgcc.co.uk) by 9am on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> October 2021 if you do not want your**

## COVID-19 Saliva Testing Programme

son/daughter's data to be shared with Hampshire & IOW Saliva Testing Programme and therefore you are opting out of the saliva testing.

The NHS will confidentially share positive test results with nominated senior leadership within the educational setting. This will enable the immediate initiation of contact tracing, to minimise the risk of the virus spreading.

If you have any questions, or would like to exercise your right to object to this data sharing, please [contact us](#). Our Enquiries Team at Southampton City Council is available on freephone 0808 1962 282. Normal hours are 8.30am to 5pm, Monday to Thursday, and 8.30am to 4.30pm on Fridays, excluding bank holidays. It is also possible to contact the team via live web chat.

Yours sincerely,



Mr J Habberley

Headteacher