

4<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Dear Parent or Guardian,

**RE: Lateral flow tests on site at BOA**

We are working to keep BOA as safe as possible. 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 tests'.

Along with the other protective measures we are taking, these tests will help staff and students to remain in the academy safely. Up to one third of people who have coronavirus experience no symptoms. By testing we will help to stop the virus spread and help to keep our academy open as safely as possible. The test is voluntary.

In line with the instructions from the UK Government, we will be testing all staff members and students who wish to participate from the beginning of Spring Term 2021 (11<sup>th</sup> January onwards). I enclose an instructional leaflet with some more information.

If you are happy for your child to be tested, please fill in the form below and the enclosed consent statement (one per student) and return it to us via email [info@boa-academy.co.uk](mailto:info@boa-academy.co.uk). I would also be grateful if you could inform me if you do not wish your child to be tested. This information will be kept in the strictest of confidence and will not be passed on to any external agencies.

Those taking the test will be supervised by trained staff. The 'lateral flow' tests are quick and easy, using a swab of your nose and throat passages. For under 18s, staff can oversee the swab process.

Results (which take around half an hour from testing) will be shared directly with staff members and students participating. Where participants are under 16, parents or legal guardians will also be informed.

The UK Government has assured schools that these tests work. In validation studies conducted by Oxford University and Public Health England, they were shown to be as accurate in identifying a case as a PCR test (99.68% specificity). The tests have lower sensitivity but they are better at picking up cases when a person has higher viral load, hence the need to test frequently.

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. Where participants are under 16, parents or legal guardians will also be notified. Guidance on safe travel and additional precautions will be provided along with test results.

Students will need to take a further 'PCR test' (similar to those done in local and regional testing sites) on the same day (or as soon as possible). BOA will be able to provide these PCR test kits to perform at home or you can go to [www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test](http://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test) or call 119 to book a follow-up test. If ordering a PCR test yourselves, you should choose to visit a drive-through test site if possible, as it is faster than requesting a home test.

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

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

### **What happens if the test is negative?**

Staff members and students will be able to stay in the academy and resume their activities as normal. A small number of students may need to repeat the test if the first test was invalid or void for some reason.

### **What if a close contact at the academy/college tests positive?**

In the case of close contact of someone in BOA who has tested positive for COVID-19, the staff member or student (the 'close contact') will be able to return to the academy if they agree to be tested once a day for 7 days and the tests are negative. If they do not want to take the test, they will need to self-isolate as per the national guidelines. This does not apply to household members or close contacts outside of BOA who will still need to self-isolate. Further details will be provided at the time, but if you would prefer to self-isolate instead of doing daily testing, you can.

### **What if my child develops symptoms?**

This testing programme at BOA 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 (England, Wales and Northern Ireland) or 0300 303 2713 (Scotland) or visiting <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>.

We will support our staff members and students throughout, but please contact us if you need this information in any other language or format. **Also, if you have any questions before you give consent, please email the academy with your query.** You can call the office on 0121 359 9300 or email [info@boa-academy.co.uk](mailto:info@boa-academy.co.uk).

Yours faithfully,



Alistair Chattaway  
**Principal**