

Hampshire and Isle of Wight COVID-19 Saliva Testing Programme



Dear Parent, Carer or Guardian,

Thank you for participating in the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Saliva Testing Programme. Alongside other steps being taken to keep classrooms open and as safe as possible for your children and teaching staff, high uptake and regular participation in asymptomatic testing is vital to identify those most likely to spread COVID-19 to others without realising it.

How prevalent is COVID-19?

- In the last few weeks, there have been more than 34,000 cases per day, meaning COVID-19 is spreading quickly in the community.
- The rate among Year 7 - Year 11 has risen sharply since the new academic year
- ONS estimate that 4.6% of this population to have COVID-19 (25 September 2021).
- Local Directors of Public Health are seeing the highest number of positive COVID-19 cases in the 10-19 year old age group since the pandemic began.

New recommendation

As a result of higher transmission rates, **twice-weekly saliva testing** is now recommended. This recommendation is supported by the saliva testing programme's Scientific Advisory Group, as well as local Directors of Public Health. It will apply until rates of infection become more stable at lower levels, at which point it will be appropriate to revert to once weekly testing for ongoing surveillance and screening purposes.

Testing dates for Cantell students from WC October 18th will be:

Year 7: Monday and Thursday

Year 8: Tuesday and Thursday

Year 9: Monday and Wednesday

Year 10: Wednesday and Friday

Year 11: Wednesday and Friday

Minimising disruption this winter

COVID-19 transmission is expected to increase, coupled with general respiratory illnesses and infections. We want to keep your children, their teaching staff, parents, guardians, vulnerable friends, family members and the wider community safe and well as we approach the festive season. The vaccination programme is underway, but not all children will be protected in this way.

We hope that more frequent testing will give you additional reassurance, confidence and peace of mind. Please remind your child to participate **twice-weekly**. With more of our school community participating and regularly testing, the more likely we are to prevent the virus from spreading and causing disruption in our school community. It is more important than ever that we all do our bit to keep everyone safe and in school.

Make every sample count!

Face Coverings

As we approach the final week of this half term and hopefully the last week where we are mandating the use of face masks can I please ask for your support in ensuring your child

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brings their own face covering. We continue to have to give out a significant number of disposable face coverings on a daily basis; this is unacceptable and hugely harmful and damaging for the environment.

As always a huge thanks for your support

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Harry' or a similar name.

Mr Harry Kutty
Headteacher