

Hampshire and Isle of Wight COVID-19 saliva testing programme

27 January 2021

Dear Parent/ Carer



Participation in the Hampshire and Isle of Wight COVID-19 saliva testing programme

We are pleased to share the news that our school has been invited to take part in an exciting new COVID-19 testing programme during this term.

The test is very simple and involves collecting a sample of saliva in a plastic pot. Free weekly tests will be offered to **all pupils** and **all staff** at the school. You will receive a testing pack which contains pots and a leaflet that shows your child how to complete the test at home.

Testing is not compulsory, but I strongly encourage you to take part, so please do look out for this. We will be sharing more details with you soon about how this process will work. In anticipation, to ensure that you receive any communications about the programme in a timely way please could you check that all your contact details, email and phone number are up to date and alert us to any changes

What is the testing programme?

The HIOW testing programme is funded by Government and aims to benefit our local communities and help to reduce transmission of the virus. It follows a successful pilot programme in Southampton, where pupils and staff in four schools and at the University of Southampton were tested on a weekly basis. The pilot showed, along with other extensive studies, that saliva testing is effective in identifying people who are infectious and are most likely to transmit the disease. It is easy to do and is not invasive. In January and February, testing will be rolled out in a phased way to all secondary schools and further education colleges across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight and offered to all pupils, students and staff.

Lessons run by the team from LifeLab at the University of Southampton will be taking place in school to explain this process to our children and young people in a fun and engaging way. There will also be a website with further information and a Frequently Asked Questions tab.

Why is this important?

Knowing who has COVID-19 is vital to stopping its spread.

We hope that you are as excited as we are about the potential for this test to help us manage the risk of COVID-19. Alongside all the other measures we are taking to control the virus, it will help us to keep our communities safe and well and keep our schools and colleges open.

We will be in touch soon with further details of how your child can take part in this exciting programme.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Krista Dawkins'.

Krista Dawkins
Headteacher, Crestwood Community School