

Dear all,

We are pleased to share this update on rapid asymptomatic testing with the latest FAQs. We are hugely grateful for the efforts of staff, volunteers, parents and pupils in continuing to implement the testing programme in schools and colleges.

Key updates:

- Most pupils and students in secondary schools and further education colleges have now been offered three (LFD) tests at school or college which gave pupils and students the opportunity to get used to swabbing in a supervised environment.
- Pupils and students will transition this week to home test kits for regular twice-weekly testing to get into the habit of regular testing. To support this transition, we will be running another webinar event for secondary schools and colleges on **17 March 12pm - 1:30pm**. [A link to join the MS Teams webinar is here.](#)
- Test at home does not require written medical consent: consent is given by completing the test. Schools and colleges should ensure pupils, students and staff are reporting the results of tests online, or by phone, even if the result is negative or void as it provides useful information on the prevalence of the virus and where there are quality assurance issues. Testing remains voluntary but is strongly encouraged. Pupils and staff must be provided with the privacy notice before testing begins.
- Individuals who return a positive antigen LFD test result must self-isolate immediately, along with their household and close contacts, in line with NHS Test and Trace guidance. They need to record and share their result (whether positive, negative or void) with NHS Test and Trace and book order a confirmatory PCR test if they are testing at home (confirmatory PCR tests are not needed if the test was conducted through an on-site ATS). They should also inform their school or college of the positive result.
- Staff in secondary schools and colleges are now receiving twice-weekly home testing. Staff and students at Independent Learning Providers and Adult Community Learning Providers will receive access to home testing on demand through an online portal hosted by NHS Test and Trace.
- It is important to keep testing going through the Easter holidays to manage the spread of COVID-19 and encourage staff, pupil and students to test themselves twice a week. Please find below our latest updates and some FAQs on the Government's rapid testing programme in education settings.

Please find below our latest updates across other educational settings and some **FAQs** on the Government's rapid testing programme in education settings:

- Testing in primary schools, school-based and maintained nurseries remains the same. Primary school staff will continue to be tested twice weekly using home testing kits. Primary school pupils will **not** be tested as part of the rapid asymptomatic testing programme in schools.
- The private, voluntary and independent nursery workforce will also be tested twice weekly from 22 March, using home testing kits they have started to receive this week.
- Staff and students in Higher Education settings will continue to receive twice-weekly testing on site.
- Testing for families and childcare bubbles of students, pupils and staff is now available via home test kits for collection at testing sites ([COVID Test Finder \(test-and-trace.nhs.uk\)](#)) or through an online ordering service. More information on ordering home test kits can be found [here](#).
- Guidance on testing for schools and colleges is available on the [document sharing platform](#).

Key FAQs:

1- What happens if a test is positive?

If anyone's test is positive, they should immediately start isolating in line with [public health guidance](#). Members of their household should also start isolating.

Where a pupil's test has been taken on site under supervision, there is no need for a further test to confirm the result. Robust evaluations from Public Health England and the University of Oxford show lateral flow tests have extremely low rates of false positives. LFD tests taken on test sites, such as on school and college grounds, do not need a Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) confirmation because these tests are done in a supervised environment.

All pupils, staff, and their households who take their tests at home should report the results by calling 119 or through the [online form](#). Tests at home are not conducted in a controlled environment and will not have trained staff on hand – for this reason confirmatory PCR tests should be taken.

As such, if a pupil, a member of staff or a member of their household gets a positive result at home they should report the result and arrange to have a PCR test by following [this link](#).

In the event that the PCR test is negative – that they do not have Covid 19 – this overrides the lateral flow test if it was taken at home and they should therefore return to school.

2- Can someone undertake home testing if they refuse to take 3 initial ATS tests? - Will testing just result in false positives that mean pupils and teachers have to miss school unnecessarily?

Robust evaluations from PHE and the University of Oxford show that LFD tests are accurate, reliable and successfully identify those with coronavirus (COVID-19) who could pass on the virus without realising. The tests have extremely low rates of false positives. The requirement for confirmatory PCR following an LFD test taken on site has been suspended. This includes tests on school and college grounds. It is due to higher prevalence and because these tests are done in a controlled environment and trained staff read the results.

If a pupil or student received a supervised school-based LFD test, as part of the rapid asymptomatic testing programme, and it was positive then they and other members of their household must self-isolate. PCR testing is not advised if you have received a positive result from an LFD test at a school or college test site. If a parent was to do this and it returned a negative result, the policy remains that the pupil or student, their close contacts, and other members of their household must still self-isolate.

All positive results from rapid tests undertaken at home need to be confirmed with a standard PCR test. This is because these tests are not conducted in a controlled environment and will not have trained staff on hand. Following positive LFD test at home, a confirmatory PCR test should be booked online or by calling 119. Whilst awaiting the PCR result, the pupil or student and their close contacts should self-isolate. If the PCR test is negative, it overrides the self-test LFD test (at home only) and a child can return to school.

The accuracy of the test is linked to the quality of swabbing and testing. It is therefore advised that students undertake initial swabbing under supervision at school. This is why secondary schools and colleges have been asked to offer students three tests on-site, each test three to five days apart, upon their return prior to transitioning them to home testing. If a student decides to participate in testing after the initial wave of on-site testing, they should visit their ATS site to be shown how to use the test, to practise self-swabbing and to collect their at-home testing kits.

3- Should all positive and negative home test results be recorded? For secondaries with potentially 1400 individuals, this would be an enormous undertaking.

All results – negative, positive or void - should be reported to NHS Test and Trace online to ensure that we have a full picture of the spread and prevalence of COVID.

Schools and colleges are required to keep a test kit log, where they record which individual has taken which kits home. This must be separate from the results register for data protection reasons. A template is provided on the document sharing platform. Schools and colleges are also encouraged to keep a record of staff, pupil and student tests results. This will help with contact tracing, since schools/colleges cannot view staff results otherwise. A template record is provided on the document sharing platform. Students and staff are also required to record and share their result (whether positive, negative or void) with NHS Test and Trace.

Positive results should be shared with the school/college so that immediate contact tracing can take place in school. Void and negative results are useful information for their school both to monitor stocks of kits and to identify any issues that might need escalating to DfE or NHS Test & Trace.

4- When home testing begins and a child tests positive what happens to their bubble/contacts if their tests are negative? Do they still have to isolate, or do they continue to come in until they test positive?

Where an individual tests positive at home they should immediately start isolating in line with [public health guidance](#), and book a confirmatory PCR test, either online or via 119. Members of their household and their close contacts should also start isolating. It is the responsibility of the school/college to operate bubble management and maintain a list of close contacts. The school then determines which staff and students should self-isolate in the event of a positive case. Additional advice to schools is available from the DfE helpline.

Close contacts should only arrange a test if they develop COVID-19 symptoms. If for any reason the close contact has a negative test result during their 10-day isolation period, they must continue to self-isolate. Even if they don't have symptoms, they could still pass the infection on to others. Close contacts should stay at home for the full 10 days to avoid putting others at risk.

It is important to note that if the PCR test result is negative, it overrides the LFD test and the individual, their household and close contacts can be released from isolation.

5- Will schools be funded for their efforts on testing?

We will support schools, colleges and specialist settings with the costs of delivering on-site testing. We have provided an updated Workforce Planning Tool which illustrates the workforce requirements and associated funding for testing for eligible institutions across the Spring term, in line with Departmental testing expectations. We have updated our [ready reckoner](#) which enables schools and colleges to estimate the amount of funding that they will receive.

Funding will be paid retrospectively, by reference to the number of test results your school or college has recorded on your individual school or college account on the

NHS Test & Trace Log Results Website. The Workforce Planning Tool can be found here: [Planning Tools - Google Drive](#).

6- Do staff, pupils and students have to test during the Easter holidays?

It is important to keep testing going through the Easter holidays to manage the spread of COVID-19 and encourage staff, pupils and students to get into a regular habit of testing themselves every 3-5 days (twice a week). NHS Test and Trace will be supplying sufficient test kits to schools/colleges to enable this to happen. Please check the [delivery schedule](#) to see when your kits are scheduled for delivery.

A letter template for parents has been added onto the sharing platform to support schools' and colleges' communications to parents including, testing for pupils over the Easter break, reporting results and the offer of parent and household testing.

7- Will secondary schools and colleges receive extra test kit supplies to support testing during Easter holidays?

You will receive a further delivery of Test at Home kits for staff, pupils and students w/c 15 March. There is no need to place an order for them, deliveries will be made between 15 and 19 March. Please check the delivery schedule via [Planning Tools - Google Drive](#) to see when your kits are scheduled for delivery.

8- Will primary schools, school-based nurseries, and maintained nursery schools receive extra test kit supplies to support testing during Easter holidays?

You will need to use the [contact form](#) to place orders for additional home test kits to enable twice weekly testing of staff to continue over the Easter period.

Orders placed before 5pm on Wednesdays will arrive the following week, after this time orders will be processed and delivered the subsequent week. Therefore, we advise that you place an order no later than **5pm on Wednesday 17th March** to ensure delivery in w/c 22 March.

Further information on how to order additional test kits, and details on the national testing policy can be found on the [primary schools and nurseries document sharing platform](#).

We value your feedback on this update, please do to:
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