

COVID-19 TESTING FOR SECONDARY SCHOOL PUPILS



The Coronavirus pandemic has caused many challenges, not least for children and families where the delivery of education has mainly been provided remotely for a number of months.

All schools have robust risk assessments in place with many procedures and measures in place to promote safe learning environments.

Everyone is pleased that schools have opened their doors to all pupils – and we all need to play our part to keep those doors open.

One way to do this is testing before returning to school when there has been school holidays. By identifying pupils and staff that are not displaying any symptoms, but test positive for COVID, they can then self-isolate and stop passing on the virus (unknowingly) to others.

In advance of schools welcoming all students back, the Department of Education has announced that all students who consent, should be tested three times at school during the first 2 weeks of term. After this families will receive home testing kits to test themselves twice weekly.

For this reason there may be a slightly staggered return to school in the first week with different year groups returning on different dates.

Your school will send you a consent form for testing, a date for your child's return to school and the dates of the proposed testing on site.

Why is testing important?

It is crucial that we break the chains of transmission of the virus and safeguard the health of the staff and pupils.

COVID-19 is easily transmitted from person to person and people can have the virus without having any symptoms. They could (unknowingly) pass it on to others.

Through regular (twice weekly) testing, people who have the virus can be identified and importantly, they can then self-isolate and reduce the chances of them passing it on to others.

Testing does not replace existing protective measures such as handwashing, wearing a face covering on public transport / in shops and maintaining social distancing.

Is testing mandatory?

No, testing is voluntary and an adult needs to accompany under 16s in the community testing sites or an adult will need to complete a consent form sent to you from school. You will need to provide a mobile phone number so that the test results can be sent to you and any track and trace contact can be made if there is a positive test. This consent will only be used for testing purposes.

You will still be able to attend school if you do not have a test.

Testing is encouraged to try to identify people with the virus (but without symptoms) to break the chain of transmission.

What does the test involve?

Lateral Flow Tests will be used. This involves self-swabbing (assistance will be provided if required) of the throat and nose. Full instructions will be issued during testing.

How quickly will the results be returned?

Test results are normally turned around in 30 minutes.

What happens after the test?

If you test positive, you and others in your household, support bubble or close contacts must self isolate for 10 days from the day of the test. This means you cannot leave your house. Once you have completed the self-isolation period, you can return to school.

If you test negative, you can continue with your daily routine. However, the test result is only at that moment in time so regular testing is recommended.

If you test positive with a home testing kit you must book a further test by calling **119** or **www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test** to confirm your result, if you test positive at school you will be asked to be picked up immediately and you and your family should self-isolate, you do not need to have another test.

How often are the tests?

Testing is recommended twice a week. This should be three times in the first 2 weeks of term at school and then twice weekly at home after this.

How reliable are the Lateral Flow tests?

It is very rare to have a false positive with these tests which is why you must self-isolate immediately if you have a positive result. It is possible to have a false negative result therefore you must continue to follow social distancing and handwashing guidelines even if your result is negative. These tests are for people without symptoms. If at any point you develop Coronavirus symptoms or feel unwell please contact **119** or go to **www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test** to book a symptomatic test which are different to these tests.

What happens if I don't take part in testing?

The test is voluntary, but by taking part in regular testing, it will identify if you have the virus and whether or not you could be passing it on to others.

Further information

If you have any questions or would like further information, please contact your school.

STAY HOME ▶ PROTECT THE NHS ▶ SAVE LIVES