

18 August 2021

COVID-19 asymptomatic testing programme for school/ELC staff and pupils

Dear Parent/Carer,

I am writing to let you know about the Schools/ELC Asymptomatic Testing Programme, which is in place as part of the package of COVID-19 risk reduction mitigations in schools across Scotland, and to give you more information about how the programme operates in our school.

Why is our school/setting participating in the programme?

Along with the other protective measures we are implementing to keep our school community safe, regular testing of staff and pupils will help to further reduce risks for staff and children and young people in our school.

The programme will help to identify positive cases where an individual has no symptoms, but is still infectious. By asking those who test positive and their close contacts to self-isolate, in line with national guidance, the likelihood of the virus being passed on in the school environment, is minimised.

Who can take part?

The regular testing is open to all school staff and **pupils in Secondary schools** who are regularly attending the school premises. The testing programme also includes school-aged childcare staff and early learning and childcare staff in settings that are attached to schools. References to 'school staff' within this letter include this wider group of childcare staff.

Anyone receiving a positive PCR test for COVID will not be able to participate in weekly LFD testing for 90 days.

Does everyone have to take part?

Testing is voluntary. No-one who is otherwise permitted to come to school will be prevented from doing so just because they do not wish to participate. However, we are strongly encouraging all school staff **and pupils in Secondary schools** who are attending school to participate wherever possible, in order to contribute to the wellbeing of our school community.

What will the testing involve?

Our school is being provided with a supply of Lateral Flow Device (LFD) test kits by the Scottish Government and the UK Department of Health and Social Care for use at home.

We will give each participant a supply of free, LFD test kits to take home. Each participant will be asked to sign for these in a log at the point of handover. Completion of this test kit log is a regulatory requirement.

We will then ask individuals to test at home twice a week (every three to four days), ideally in the evening or morning before school.

The LFD tests supplied do not require laboratory processing and can provide a quick result in 15-30 minutes. From August 2021 schools and ELC settings will transition from using Innova COVID-19 Self-Tests (Rapid Antigen Test) to ACON Flowflex Self-Tests.

The ACON Flowflex Self-Test requires a nose-only swab, and will show results at 15 minutes. Comprehensive guidance on self-testing is covered in the “Instructions for Use” (IFU) which come with every test kit – it is important that this is read carefully. This [step-by-step video shows how to do the ACON Flowflex LFD test](#) and how to assist a young person in doing the test.

Once the test has been conducted you must log the test result – whether positive, negative or void – online at <https://www.nhsinform.scot/campaigns/coronavirus-covid-19-report-your-test-result>. Recording results helps public health experts understand what is happening with the virus, and take action if necessary.

NB: It is important to note that this regular testing is only for individuals without symptoms. Those with symptoms must self-isolate immediately and book a PCR test via NHS Inform. People with symptoms must not rely on a negative LFD result to continue to attend school.

What happens next?

Please discuss the contents of this letter and the privacy notice with your child. If your child wishes to participate in testing, and you are content for them to do so, please complete the online consent form which you will find here <https://forms.gle/FfPdVzbtJ6z8HDTG8>

We will continue to support and communicate with our staff, pupils and school communities as we implement this programme. Please let us know if you have any questions.

In the meantime, some Frequently Asked Questions can be found in the annex to this letter and further information on this programme (including the Privacy Notice) can be found here www.tinyurl.com/LFDTestInfo

Yours faithfully,

Susan Cook

Head Teacher

Annex – Frequently Asked Questions

How will my child know how to use the tests?

Comprehensive guidance on conducting self-testing is contained in the 'Instructions for Use' leaflet which is provided with each test kit.

The Instructions for Use set out clearly how to use the test kits, or how to support someone to do so. They also provide a number to call if there are any problems with the test kits.

Are the tests safe and accurate?

LFDs used by the UK Government undergo a rigorous [validation process](#) including evaluations by Public Health England and the University of Oxford. The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) provides ongoing regulatory oversight.

LFDs are effective at detecting a high viral load in an individual, and registering an appropriate positive result. These are people who are thought to be the most infectious.

LFDs are highly specific, which means that only a very small proportion of people who do not have coronavirus will receive a positive result (false positive). There is however, a risk of returning a false negative result when viral loads are low (e.g. in the early stages of infection). This is why the Scottish Government recommend two LFD tests 3 to 4 days apart, or regular testing, to enhance detection by picking up any cases which were not detected during the first test and to catch any new infections.

What happens if there is a problem with the tests?

Any incidents that could potentially impact the quality or safety of testing should be reported to the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA).

For incidents occurring in a home setting, please report any issues (for example: something damaged, or missing or difficult to use in the kit, you are unable to log a result) to **119**.

If there is a clinical incident which led to, or has the potential for, harm (e.g. swab breaks in the mouth, bleeding, allergic reaction on using the kit etc.) please report it on <https://coronavirus-yellowcard.mhra.gov.uk/>.

This is not for seeking immediate medical care. Medical care should be sought through the usual route of contacting 111 or 999.

What happens if my child tests positive?

If your child receives a positive result on your Lateral Flow Device at home, they must result online at [NHS Inform](#) (or by calling 119), self-isolate and [book a confirmatory PCR test](#).

It is important that your child begins self-isolation immediately after they receive the positive result from the LFD test, and does not wait until the result of their PCR test. We advise [visiting a \(regional or walk-through\) test site](#) as this is the quickest way to get PCR tested.

What happens if my child tests negative?

They must report the result online at <https://www.nhsinform.scot/campaigns/coronavirus-covid-19-report-your-test-result>. Individuals who test negative will be able to stay in schools and resume their activities.

What happens if the test result is “void”?

This means the test has not run correctly. Your child must report the result online at <https://www.nhsinform.scot/campaigns/coronavirus-covid-19-report-your-test-result>. They will need to take another test. Use a new test kit, and do not reuse anything from the first kit.

What if my child has been in close contact with someone who tests positive?

Test and Protect will contact staff members and pupils/children who were in close contact with a positive case to inform them that they need to self-isolate, and book a PCR test at [NHS Inform](#). Only those requested to self-isolate by Test and Protect need to do so. Whole classes or year groups are now unlikely to be required to self-isolate.

Close contacts who are under 18 years and 4 months can end self-isolation if they remain asymptomatic and their PCR test result comes back negative. We specify 18 years and 4 months to allow time for individuals to become fully vaccinated.

However, if a close contact starts to show symptoms, they and other people living in the same household need to self-isolate immediately and the close contacts need to book another test.

Close contacts who have received a positive PCR test result in the past 90 days do not need to take a PCR test and are exempt from self-isolation if they are under 18 years and 4 months or are a fully vaccinated adult. If they develop any new symptoms they need to self-isolate and book a test.

There is an [NHS Inform online guidance tool](#) for households with possible coronavirus infection, which helps you to identify if you need to self-isolate and for how long.

What if my child develops symptoms?

This testing programme at school 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 0800 028 2816 or visiting <https://www.nhsinform.scot/>. People with symptoms must not rely on a negative LFD result to continue to attend school.