



Testing in Secondary Schools and Colleges

Frequently Asked Questions

Aims of Asymptomatic Testing in Secondary Schools and Colleges

What are the objectives of the Government's asymptomatic testing strategy in education settings?

Rapid testing is a vital part of the Government's plan to suppress transmission of Covid-19 in education settings by identifying asymptomatic positive cases quickly so that those who test positive can self-isolate. This supports ensuring that other pupils and students can stay in face-to-face education.

The asymptomatic testing programme does not replace the Government's current testing policy for those with symptoms. Anyone who experiences symptoms of Covid-19 should self-isolate immediately and book a PCR test via <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/> or by calling 119 in England and Wales.

Which schools and colleges are in scope?

The following types of secondary schools and colleges are in scope:

- local authority maintained secondary schools and academies (including special schools, pupil referral units and alternative provision)
- all through schools deemed secondary
- independent schools (including independent special schools and independent alternative provision)
- hospital schools
- FE colleges (general further education colleges, sixth form colleges, special post-16 institutions). This also includes 19+ students attending college.
- Independent Training Providers and Adult Community Learning Providers, (home testing)

What is the plan for testing in the autumn?

Staff and students, of secondary school age and above, should continue to test twice weekly at home, with lateral flow device (LFD) test kits, 3-4 days apart, for the remainder of the Autumn term.



What are the Government's testing plans for schools and colleges over the Christmas Holiday?

Staff and students who are not attending their setting during the holiday period may wish to take a rapid lateral flow test in situations where they are more likely to catch or spread COVID-19. This includes spending time in crowded and enclosed spaces, or before visiting people who are at higher risk of severe illness if they catch COVID-19.

Those staff/students who are continuing to attend college over the Christmas period (such as those attending adult education providers) should continue to be encouraged to test at-home twice weekly.

What are the Government's testing plans for schools and colleges on return in January?

Secondary school pupils should undertake one test on-site at the start of term in their school asymptomatic test site (ATS) followed by one LFD self-test at home 3-4 days after their on-site test. They should then continue to test in line with government guidelines.

FE students and staff in all secondary schools and colleges should take one LFD self-test at home either the evening or morning before they return to their school/college followed by one LFD self-test at home 3-4 days after. They should then continue to test in line with government guidelines.

Schools and colleges should continue to retain a small ATS (1 to 3 bays, depending on the size of the school) onsite, so you can offer testing to students who are unable to test themselves at home or would prefer to test onsite.

Further guidance can be found on the document sharing platform we have shared with schools and FE providers. If you do not think you have access, then contact the DfE helpline.

Why do secondary school pupils need to test onsite when they return after Christmas?

Testing onsite on return is an effective way to reduce the risk of transmission in schools and support the continuation of face-to-face education, by identifying positive cases and isolating those that are the most contagious as soon as is practical. At the same time, we recognise that testing on site is an additional ask of schools. To minimise educational disruption, we are asking schools to plan to deliver one test onsite in the first week of term.

Should I order additional test kits?

To enable testing on return in January, you will need to order sufficient test kits by



Tuesday 30th November.

Please check your test kit stock levels and make an order of test kits so that both staff and students are able to test over the Christmas holidays if required and for the first week of January, using home test kits. Secondary schools will also need to order ATS kits and sufficient home test kits to ensure secondary students can continue to test in line with Government guidelines. Please specify when your setting closes for Christmas in the 'delivery instructions' when placing your order to ensure you receive your delivery.

Special Needs and Alternative Provision settings

We recognise specialist settings will have additional considerations to consider when delivering asymptomatic testing and additional guidance has been published and circulated. We recognise that self-swabbing may cause significant concerns for some children and young people with SEND. Testing is voluntary and no child or young person will be tested unless informed consent has been given by the appropriate person.

Which staff are in scope for testing?

Schools and colleges should offer testing to all staff who are school and college based, including teaching and non-teaching staff members, such as support staff, clinical practitioners and therapists. Non-permanent members of staff should also be offered testing, such as trainee teachers on placement in school, volunteers and supply workforce. Some staff, for example those employed through the NHS in specialist settings, may have separate arrangements for regular testing.

Is participation in testing compulsory?

No. Testing is voluntary, but staff, pupils and students are strongly encouraged to participate as testing regularly helps to reduce the spread in school and college settings through asymptomatic transmission. Staff, pupils and students who decline to participate can still attend school or their FE provider.

We have published a Toolkit on 'How to encourage pupils and students to test regularly' which can be accessed [here](#). This sets out strategies and best practice that have been adopted by school and college leaders to encourage their pupils and students continue to test regularly.

On-site Asymptomatic Testing Sites (ATS)

Our pupils/students can only test on-site. What should we do?

Settings should work with pupils/students and their families to agree the most appropriate way of them accessing testing. Even if it is appropriate for the majority of



pupils/students to test at home we recommend schools/colleges with an on-site ATS retain a small ATS (1 to 3 bays, depending on the size of the school) onsite, so you can offer testing to students who are unable to test themselves at home or would prefer to test onsite.

We have also made funding available to support all secondary schools, special schools and colleges deliver on-going on-site testing for a small proportion of their pupils, where test at home is not appropriate.

We anticipate that this will require a maximum of 1 to 3 testing bays for most schools and colleges, depending on their size. In Special Schools, Alternative Provision and Special Post-16 institutions we anticipate that on-site testing may be more appropriate for a greater proportion of children and young people; these settings should carefully consider the specific needs of their pupils, to establish the right level of on-site testing they continue to deliver. The revised conditions of the grant are available [here](#).

Secondary schools and colleges can find detailed information on the number of staff and estimated time and space needed for each asymptomatic testing site, and training needs in the following [Schools Colleges How To Guide](#).

Will insurance companies who work with schools and colleges, including the Risk Protection Arrangement (RPA) scheme, cover all the activities related to the asymptomatic testing programme?

The RPA will indemnify members if a claim is brought by a third party (including pupils) or employees. It will cover death, injury, or damage to third-party property, due to the school or college undertaking the asymptomatic tests.

Schools and colleges that are not members of the RPA, should contact their individual commercial insurance provider, for definitive clarification on cover.

RPA cover is subject to the usual RPA Membership Rules and its terms, conditions, and limitations. It will include defence costs and any damages/compensation that the Member is legally liable to pay to the claimant. The RPA will not provide an indemnity to any other party (e.g., the machine manufacturer) if the other party incurs a legal liability.

It is a requirement that risk assessments are undertaken, recorded, and adhered to. In the event of loss or damage to any equipment that is owned by or the Member's responsibility (e.g., through a lease or hire agreement) used in the provision of the testing, the RPA will provide an indemnity to the Member for the cost of repair or replacement. The cover is subject to the usual RPA Membership Rules (including all limitations, conditions, and exclusions).

What funding/workforce support will settings receive? How is this different



from last time?

We continue to provide funding to support schools with ATS testing in line with departmental testing policy. For initial testing on return in the spring term, funding will be calculated on the same basis as earlier rounds of testing, adjusted to reflect the fact that schools are asked to offer students 1 ATS test on return.

What happens if a parent is unable to collect a child who has tested positive?

In non-residential schools, if a pupil displays coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, or has a positive test, while at their school they should avoid using public transport and, wherever possible, be collected by a member of their family or household.

In exceptional circumstances, if parents or carers cannot arrange to have their child collected, if age-appropriate and safe to do so the child should walk, cycle or scoot home following a positive test result. If this is not possible, alternative arrangements may need to be organised by the school. The local authority may be able to help source a suitable vehicle which would provide appropriate protection for the driver, who must be made aware that the individual has tested positive or is displaying symptoms.

If a pupil is awaiting collection:

- they should be moved, if possible, to a room where they can be isolated behind a closed door, depending on the age and needs of the pupil, with appropriate adult supervision if required.
- a window should be opened for fresh air ventilation if it is safe to do so.
- if it is not possible to isolate them, move them to an area which is at least 2 metres away from other people.
- if they need to go to the bathroom while waiting to be collected, they should use a separate bathroom if possible - the bathroom must be cleaned and disinfected using standard cleaning products before being used by anyone else.
- personal protective equipment (PPE) must be worn by staff caring for the pupil while they await collection if a distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained (such as for a very young child or a child with complex needs) - more information on PPE use can be found in the [safe working in education, childcare and children's social care settings guidance](#)

What is the 'bulk upload' service?

To support onsite testing, schools and colleges have the option to register up to 100 test kits at a time, using a service known as 'bulk upload'.



This service has been upgraded to enable you to also record the test results associated with those test kits, rather than having to upload results individually. This will reduce the time required to process results.

How do I use the 'bulk upload' service to register ATS test kits and record results?

Settings can use the bulk upload service to register test kits and record their results for up to 100 pupils/students:

Please refer to the [Digital Handbook](#) for a step by step guide that explains how to register test kits, record test results and upload to the bulk upload service. Guidance is also provided in the [green how to guide](#) and on gov.uk here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/organisation-testing-registration-record-of-users/multiple-registration-upload-guidance>

If you encounter any issues when using the bulk upload service, please contact 119.

Home testing

How will staff, pupils and students know what do to with the home test kits?

Detailed information on how to self-swab and process the tests is in the Instructions for Use and there is an [NHS video demonstrating how to carry out a test](#) . In addition, a detailed [How to Guide for home testing](#), is available.

The home testing instructions have been translated into multiple languages online through this link here: [COVID-19 self-test help - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#).

What supervision do different age groups need for testing at home?

Pupils/students aged 18 and over should self-test and report the result, with assistance if needed. Pupils/students aged 12-17 should self-test and report with adult supervision. The adult may conduct the test if necessary. When testing at home, children aged 11 (who attend a secondary school), should be tested by an adult.

Those with a negative antigen LFD test result can continue to attend school/college.

Why should I report my result to NHS Test & Trace?

Reporting all results is necessary because it helps to reduce infection rates in your community, protect people at higher risk of infection and prevent and reduce the spread of the virus.

How do I report my result to NHS Test & Trace?

It is important that individuals provide their results (positive, negative or void) to NHS



Test and Trace to support contact tracing via the self-report gov.uk page. Results (positive, negative or void) should also be shared with school / college in the exceptional event that a setting is asked to assist with contact tracing. There are two ways staff can report their result. They can report online by visiting <http://www.gov.uk/report-covid19-result>. Alternatively they can report via telephone - Lines are open every day, 7am to 11pm, 119 in England and Wales. All staff should select the second option ('A school, college or other education provider') when filling in the 'Who was the test for?' section for reporting test results on <https://www.gov.uk/report-covid19-result>

What record keeping does the school or college need to do?

Schools and colleges are required to keep a test kit log, where they record which individual has taken which kits home. This is required in the unlikely event of an incident requiring investigation or batch recall. This log will also help record that staff have received the new instructions for use. This must be separate from the results register for data protection reasons. A template is provided on the document sharing platform.

When testing at home, settings will not automatically find out if staff, pupils or students have taken a test, therefore, schools and colleges are also encouraged to keep a record of staff, pupil and student tests results. This will help in the exceptional event that a setting is asked to assist with contact tracing. A template record is provided on the document sharing platform.

Do students and staff who are fully vaccinated need to continue testing?

Yes. Testing remains important in reducing the risk of transmission of infection. Current public health guidance is that regular testing should continue, even for those who have been fully vaccinated. Testing remains voluntary but is strongly encouraged.

Antigen Lateral Flow Devices (LFDs)

Why are you using antigen lateral flow tests instead of PCR tests?

Antigen LFD tests produce results much quicker than PCR tests. With antigen lateral flow tests, a result is available within 30 minutes or less, rather than 1-2 days as is the case with PCR tests. The rapid turnaround has a significant impact on transmission reduction that might occur in the time gap.

How accurate is an antigen lateral flow device (LFD) test?

Antigen lateral flow tests have been widely and successfully used to detect COVID-19 in asymptomatic individuals and are approved by the Medicines and Healthcare



products Regulatory Agency (MHRA). Using antigen LFD tests is crucial in the fight against the virus.

Extensive clinical evaluation has been carried out on the antigen lateral flow tests. Evaluations from UK Health Security Agency and the University of Oxford show these tests are accurate and sensitive enough to be used in the community for screening and surveillance purposes.

Antigen LFD tests identify individuals who are likely to be infectious. These individuals tend to spread the virus to many people and so identifying by LFD remains important.

Why is on-site ATS testing now being done via Orient Gene Lateral Flow Device (LFD) tests?

These tests were introduced because they are easier to use and quicker to process than the previous Innova LFD kits. Further information about the Orient Gene test kit can be found on the [document sharing platform](#).

What is the alternative to Orient Gene if a pupil or student cannot nasal swab?

Sites should retain some Innova ATS test kits for use by students for the first week of January, pupils or staff members who are unable to nasal swab and are undertaking testing on-site. In this case, the Innova ATS test kit should be used for throat swabbing only and it is important you ensure the appropriate testing instructions for the kit you are using are followed.

Please contact the helpdesk on 0800 046 8687 if you have pupils or students who require Innova test kits for use on-site (as they cannot have a nasal swab and cannot be tested at home) and you are running low on stock.

I have received Orient Gene ATS kits and the instructions for use say 'for clinical use only', what should I do?

A small number of Orient Gene ATS testing kits for secondary schools and colleges have been issued with the incorrect instructions inside the box.

The instructions are incorrect because the swabbing methodology for Orient Gene has since been updated to nasal-only swabs by the manufacturer and are now suitable for use by non-medical professionals, including individuals aged 12 or above (and 11-year-olds in year 7). The incorrect instructions implied this was not the case.

This means that the test kits you have received can be used in schools and colleges for ATS testing and the published guidance on the [document sharing platform](#) reflects this.

I have received a different type of at home test kit, labelled <Orient Gene> or <Acon- Flowflex> . Should I throw the old ones away?



No. You should use your Innova test kits first and then start using the new Orient Gene / Acon-Flowflex ones. You should only place an order for more test kits when your current stock starts to run low.



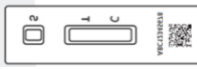



How can I tell the difference between Orient Gene ATS test kits and Orient Gene self-test kits (for at-home testing)?

Orient Gene ATS test kits come in packs of 20, whereas Orient Gene self-test kits come in packs of 7, for at-home testing. Orient Gene ATS test kits (in packs of 20) should only be used for onsite testing and packs of 7 Orient Gene test kits should only be supplied for at-home testing. Each staff member or student should be supplied with a pack of 7 test kits for at-home testing, to enable 3.5 weeks of testing.

Are the new kits very different from the old ones that I’m used to?

The Orient Gene and Acon-Flowflex test kits are just as effective at detecting asymptomatic cases of COVID 19 as the Innova test kits. The kits come in boxes of 7 so one box will still enable you to test for 3.5 weeks before you need additional test kits. The way you process the test is slightly different, as Orient Gene and Acon-Flowflex tests only require a nasal swab (not nasal and throat like Innova) Further information about how to process an orient gene or Acon-Flowflex test can be found on the document sharing platform.

The main changes between the types of test kit are in the table below:

Differences	Innova	Orient Gene	Acon-Flowflex
Device			
Test Kit package	White and teal 	Green and white 	Blue and white 
Preparing the extraction solution – number of drops	6 drops	Approx. 10 drops	No drops required?



<p>Process swab – swab rotations and processing</p> <p>Further information on the swabbing process can be found in step 6 of this guide</p>	<p>Follow the rotation process for approx. 10 seconds, then squeeze the swab head by squeezing the extraction tube several times.</p>	<p>Follow the rotation process (shown in step 6) at least 6 times and then leave the swab in the extraction tube for 1 minute, then squeeze the swab head by squeezing the extraction tube several times.</p>	<p>Follow the rotation process for approx. 30 seconds then rotate the swab 5 times while squeezing the side of the tube.</p>
<p>Loading solution into LFD</p>	<p>2 drops</p>	<p>4 drops</p>	<p>4 drops</p>
<p>Results analysis – result development timings</p>	<p>A positive result will appear and can be reported between 20-30 minutes. If a positive line does not appear, you must wait until the 30 minute mark to report it as negative or void.</p>	<p>Read the results at 15 minutes. Do not interpret the result after 20 minutes.</p>	<p>Wait 15 minutes until you read the result and read after 15-30 minutes. Do not read after 30 minutes.</p>
<p>Administering a swab sample</p>	<p>Nasal and throat</p>	<p>Double nasal</p>	<p>Double nasal</p>

Now Orient Gene and Acon-Flowflex nasal only self-test swab kits are in supply in most areas, can I stop using nasal/throat swabs? Nasal only swabs are easier to use.

Even though most settings are receiving nasal only swab self-test kits, it is not guaranteed which self-test kits schools and colleges will receive, as current policy states that test kits provided could be either nasal only or nasal/throat swabs. There are currently no plans to completely remove nasal/throat swab self-test kits from the supply chain. Staff, secondary pupils and students should continue to use whichever test kits are provided by the setting.

We are being supplied with nasal only test kits but have staff/students who are unable to nasal swab, what should they do?

In exceptional circumstances, where staff or students are unable to nasal swab, they should use an Innova LFD test kit to throat swab only. Sites should retain some packs of Innova test kits for staff or students who are unable to nasal swab. If you have run out of Innova test kits but have staff or students who are unable to tolerate a nasal swab please contact 119.



Test kit supplies

How will test kits be provided?

All secondary schools and colleges can re-order both ATS test kits (for on-site use) and home test kits via an online ordering platform, which can be accessed at the [order coronavirus \(COVID-19\) test kits for your organisation](#) page on gov.uk.

How many test kits should I order?

Only order if you need additional test kits to enable your staff and pupils/ students to test on return in January. Please remember self-test kits are delivered in boxes of 7 therefore when you place an order for self-test kits for at home use, we will provide three and a half weeks' worth of testing for the number of staff and students that you have told us you need test kits for.

Will PPE be included in my order of ATS on-site testing kits?

A proportionate amount of PPE is included with all orders of ATS on site testing kits. If you place a separate order for more ATS on-site testing kits, we expect that the proportionate PPE will arrive with your order in a single delivery.

Why are we receiving ATS test kits and PPE in separate deliveries?

The reason why you are receiving these as separate deliveries is because they are being delivered by different delivery partners. Where possible deliveries are being scheduled for the same day, but this may not be possible in all cases.

How do schools/ colleges re-order test kit supplies?

You will need to access the online ordering platform and enter your school / college Unique Organisation Number (UON) to place a re-order for test kit supplies. You will be asked to submit the number of staff and students that you require test kits for in your setting.

When you place an order for self-test kits for at home use, we will provide three and a half weeks' worth of testing for the number of staff and students that you have told us you need test kits for.

When placing an order for ATS test kits, you should tell us how many staff and students you require ATS test kits for. Details of how many test kits you can expect to receive will be provided in your delivery confirmation e-mail once your order has been processed. (Deliveries come in multiples of 1260 test kits, so this would be the minimum you would receive and scaled up based on the size of your setting). If your



scheduled delivery does not provide enough ATS test kits for your setting, then you can contact NHS Test and Trace on 119 to arrange for an additional delivery.

Test kits can be ordered every 10 calendar days. Prior to placing an order you should check your current test kit stocks and only order test kits for the pupils/students/staff that need them.

Detailed guidance on how to re-order test kits can be found in the [How to Guide for Re-ordering](#).

When placing an order, should we submit the total number of staff and students in our school/ college, or just the number we need to order test kits for?

Please submit the number of staff and students that you require test kits for within your setting. We will deliver three and a half weeks' worth of testing supplies based upon the number of staff and students that you told us you needed test kits for. Prior to placing an order, you should consider your current stock levels and only what you need.

What happens if we are not able to receive the delivery for some reason?

For deliveries made by courier, the delivery partner will reattempt delivery in the next possible timeslot. Please allow up to 48 hours for a re-delivery attempt to be made. For deliveries made by Royal Mail, where no-one was available on site to receive the delivery, delivery partners will have posted a "Sorry we missed you" card, which allows you to rearrange your delivery.

What do I do if my school/college has not received their kit?

Please report any missing test kits or deliveries to NHS Test and Trace by calling 119.

Before reporting a delivery as missing, please check the expected delivery date provided in the delivery confirmation e-mail and allow 48 hours for any re-delivery attempts to be made. Please also check whether the delivery has been received by anyone else in your school or college, such as someone in your catering department.

What do I do if the online re-ordering system won't let me order enough test kits?

If you are unable to order enough test kits for the staff and students in your setting, you should call 119 and they will arrange for you to increase the number of kits you can order. It may take up to 48 hours for the changes to be made.

What should I do if I don't know what my school/ college UON is?



You can find your Unique Organisation Number at the following [link](#).

In order to use the Unique Organisation Number (UON) lookup website, please enter your URN in the organisation ID field. If you are still experiencing issues retrieving your UON please call 119 for further assistance.

My school/college is resuming ATS testing for all staff and students because we are in a local area undertaking surge testing. How can I get test kit supplies?

If you need to order additional ATS testing kits to support resuming ATS testing for all staff and pupil at your school/college, you can do this by contacting NHS Test and Trace on 119.

Whilst you can still place an order for ATS test kits on the online ordering platform, this may take up to 10 days to arrive. The quickest way to receive a delivery of the test supplies you need, in the volume required, is to call 119.

Home Testing for Independent Training Providers and Adult Community Learning Providers

As an ITP/ACLP, how do I access home testing?

Home test kits for students and staff have been able to be ordered from this [link](#). Providers need to submit the numbers of staff and students that tests will be offered to. Providers also need to confirm that the correct delivery address is on the system before ordering. This needs to be an office with a staff member in attendance to receive kits. Please note that deliveries cannot be made to Post Office boxes.

Tests will be delivered based on these student/staff numbers and will provide three and a half weeks' worth of testing. Once test kits have arrived on site and a collection point has been set up, students and staff can be offered home test kits for regular twice weekly testing. Testing remains voluntary but strongly encouraged.

How do I place reorders?

Test kits can be reordered every 10 working days using this [link](#). The number of test kits that are delivered will be based on the number of staff/students that are submitted and will cover three and a half weeks of testing. ITPs and ACLPs will not be able to order more kits before 10 working days have passed since their previous order.

Do staff/students need to do a test when they pick test kits up from their provider site?

No. Students and staff should collect test kits from their provider site and begin



testing twice weekly after they have collected their kits. Guidance on how to administer home test kits is included in the kit instructions. Additional guidance is also available on the document sharing platform.

Do we have to set up the kind of testing facility that they have in schools/colleges?

No. An Asymptomatic Test Site (ATS) does not need to be set up. All tests should be completed at home by students and staff.

Is the twice a week testing based on a full-time student and should be adjust for part time students?

Students attending their provider onsite should conduct testing at home, twice every week, 3-4 days apart. There is no need for FE providers to test staff/students that already have access to rapid testing i.e. through their workplace.

What if a learner is only attending one session/day a week or a tutor is only tutoring one day a week? Do they still need to test twice a week?

Providers should use their discretion when determining which staff and students, including adults, are offered testing. However, if staff and students are attending onsite, they should conduct testing at home twice a week, 3-4 days apart. Additional FAQs for ITPs/ACLPs on asymptomatic testing can be found [here](#).

Consent

Do you need consent to process the personal data required for testing?

Secondary schools and colleges will need to satisfy themselves that they have a lawful basis for processing personal data, which need not necessarily be consent. Schools and colleges must provide staff, pupils and parents with a privacy notice explaining how data submitted when testing is processed. The Department has provided template privacy notices for school and colleges to adapt where appropriate.

Who requires parental consent?

Pupils under 16 years old require a parent/guardian to consent to their being tested on-site. The Department has provided template consent forms using the consent form, which can be found on the Document Sharing Platform. Pupils and students aged 16 or older may consent themselves using the consent form. Young people with SEND aged 16-25 years old do not need parent/guardian consent, provided that they are able to make the decision for themselves. However, the setting will need to decide whether the pupil can reasonably provide informed consent on their own behalf and may need to consider undertaking a Mental Capacity Assessment if appropriate. Looked after children may already have consent arrangements in place,



covered by their local authority. If not, the child's social worker may consent (or seek consent from those with parental responsibility), using the consent form.

Please make sure that when staff, pupils and students transition to test at home they understand they do not give written consent for this and ensure they are issued with the privacy notice for test at home. The way you should do this is set out in [How To Guide for Testing at Home - Blue Guide](#)

What happens if a school/college cannot get the consent to test a child who is in school/college?

Testing on site requires active consent from the person being tested, or, if they are under 16, their parent or legal guardian. Any staff member, student, or pupil who does not take part in testing will still be able to attend school or college unless they develop symptoms or they have tested positive with a PCR or LFD (they may return to the setting if a positive LFD result is followed by a negative PCR within 2 days).

Can staff who have opted out join the testing programme at any point?

Yes. The school/college should share the privacy notice and relevant materials with that member of staff when they choose to participate.

Do schools/colleges need to seek consent again from families who have already consented?

Although it is good practice to update consent forms regularly, secondary schools and colleges do not need to re-seek consent for pupils/students who have already provided consent for the purposes of ATS testing on return in the autumn. However, if you wish to do so, please use the updated form on our [secondary schools and colleges document sharing platform](#). As a minimum, consent must be sought for any pupil/student who has not previously given consent for testing (e.g. new entrants in year 7) using the updated consent form template. Schools and colleges need to keep a record of consent for ATS testing and may wish to hold the information collected in the [COVID-19 Test Register](#).

Test process

What happens if a pupil, student, or member of staff's LFD test result is positive?

If a pupil, student or member of staff conducts a LFD test and it is positive then they should self-isolate immediately in line with [NHS Test and Trace guidance](#). Fully vaccinated adults and those aged under 18 and 6 months identified as close contacts will not need to self-isolate and instead will be advised to take a PCR test.



All positive results from rapid tests, whether conducted at home or at a school or college will then need to be confirmed with a PCR test within two days of the positive lateral flow test. Following a positive LFD test, a confirmatory PCR test should be booked immediately either online or by calling 119. Whilst awaiting the PCR result, the staff, pupil or student should continue to self-isolate. Anyone who tests positive having taken a PCR test will still need to self-isolate regardless of their age or vaccination status. If the PCR test is negative, it overrides the LFD test and the staff, pupil or student can return to school or college.

All existing protective measures set out in the [guidance](#) remain important and the need for these is not lessened. A negative PCR or LFD test result should not be read as a means to relax or ignore virus prevention measures intended to reduce transmission – rapid testing is an additional tool that contributes to reducing risk.

Should I still take part in the asymptomatic testing programme if I have recently tested positive for COVID-19?

If staff have recently (within 90 days) had a positive PCR test for COVID-19, they are likely to have developed some immunity. Individuals are exempt from testing by both PCR and LFD within 90 days of a positive PCR test, unless they develop new symptoms.

However, individuals may choose to take an LFD test after the 10-day isolation period, for example as part of a workplace or community testing programme. This should only be done after completion of the required self-isolation period as per [the NHS stay at home guidance](#). If they test positive with a LFD test, they should self-isolate for 10 days or longer if symptomatic.

They are still required to self-isolate if they are identified as a close contact of a positive case, even if this is within the 90-day window, unless they are aged under 18 and 6 months or fully vaccinated.

Can students and pupils swab themselves?

Yes. In an Asymptomatic Testing Site all secondary age students can swab themselves if they are able to under appropriate supervision (this includes 11-year-olds in year 7). Adult supervision is not a requirement for 18 and above.

When testing at home, pupils/students aged 18 and over should self-test and report the result, with assistance if needed. Pupils/students aged 12-17 should self-test and report with adult supervision. The adult may conduct the test if necessary.

When testing at home, children aged 11 (who attend a secondary school), should be tested by an adult.



SEND

How will asymptomatic testing be administered in a SEND context and will there be any additional support or resources for special schools or those with a high number of SEND pupils and students?

The Department for Education has provided [guidance on delivering asymptomatic testing in specialist settings](#).

What consideration is given to administering the test for SEND pupils and students or those with co-ordination issues who physically will not be able to manage this due to poor fine motor skills? Will the Test assistant be able to do the test for them?

Assisted swabbing (such as performing the swab for someone who is unable to self-swab) does not need to be done by a clinician. Special schools and specialist colleges have a range of staff to meet pupils and students' health needs. These staff already have undertaken various training to support health needs and could provide support taking swabs for those who cannot self-administer. Support for pupils who are unable to self-swab may be available..

Some settings may not have enough staff to undertake assisted swabbing, for example, due to staff absence. In these instances, further support may be available from Medacs Healthcare. [Contact us](#) for more information.

Settings may want to consider updating risk assessments to understand which of their pupils or students are unlikely to be able to self-swab and therefore are likely to require additional support or reasonable adjustments.

What about students with SEND who will not be able to manage a self-swab who are in a mainstream school?

Support for pupils who are unable to self-swab may be available if there are no suitable staff to administer tests. Support would be for children and young people whose physical and health needs prevent them from administering their own test, and parents or existing school staff cannot assist.

In some cases, the individual may wish to have a trusted adult from the setting to supervise the self-swab of the test. The setting may also wish to consider whether it would agree in exceptional circumstances to a parent coming into the setting to support their child to self-swab or to swab their child, or whether it would be more appropriate for the individual to be tested at home. This might be a reasonable adjustment for the testing of a child or young person with a disability, for example.



Miscellaneous Questions

Do test results get affected by brushing teeth, drinking water?

Avoid eating or drinking half an hour before the test. A small amount of water is acceptable. There is unlikely to be an adverse impact of brushing teeth prior to testing but it might be prudent to wait a while before testing.

Can nose swabbing be done on those with nose piercings?

Yes. If you have nose piercings, remove the piercings before swabbing. If swabbing one nostril is not possible, proceed with the other nostril.

Are the swabs latex free?

The manufacturer has confirmed that the swabs are latex free.

Does the LFD test contain any harmful substances and are there any precautions for dealing with spillages?

The products within the lateral flow test kit (including the devices themselves and the extraction buffer fluid) are not hazardous.

The swabbing and processing of a test does not inactivate the virus so caution should be taken when handling the test and when managing spillages as live virus may be present.

If a spillage does occur use a disposable cloth or paper towel, mop up the spillage and dispose of in the bag provided. The area should then be cleaned and disinfected, again the disposable cloth or paper towel should be disposed of in the bag provided.

Can schools dispose of LFD waste with general waste?

Yes. Although LFD waste was initially classified as healthcare waste when schools started testing, we have worked closely with UKHSA, Defra and the Environment Agency to assess the risks of disposing of LFD waste. As testing is not the primary activity for schools it has been agreed that used devices can be disposed of as general waste.

Why is LFD waste being treated differently in schools compared with other settings such as NHS sites?

LFD waste from schools / FE colleges and workplaces where healthcare is not the primary activity can be coded differently to DHSC / NHS sites where the primary activity is healthcare. More detailed advice is on the Document Sharing Platform.

Do the LFD tests contain animal products or have they been tested on animals?



The monoclonal antibody technology present in our lateral flow devices are necessarily generated from animal cells. This is in common with other tests of this kind, including commercially available pregnancy tests. The swab itself does not contain animal products.

During development, at no time have any component parts been tested on animals.

The Vegan Society advises vegans avoid using products made from animals as far as is practicable and possible and vegans should never stop taking prescribed medications without first talking to your doctor.

Are the LFD tests vegan?

No animal products have been used in the production of the swabs that come into direct contact with the individual using the test.

The thin paper like material inside the LFD is coated with antibodies from animal cells. No direct contact will be made between the person and this material. The monoclonal antibody technology present in our lateral flow devices are necessarily generated from animal cells. This is in common with other tests of this kind, including commercially available pregnancy tests. It is for individuals to make their own decisions based on their religious practises or dietary choices.

Are the LFD tests halal?

No animal products have been used in the production of the swabs. The swab is the only material with which the individual will come into direct contact. The individual using the test will not come into direct contact with any materials made from animal products.

The thin paper like material inside the LFD is coated with antibodies from animal cells. No direct contact will be made between the person and this material. The monoclonal antibody technology present in our lateral flow devices is generated from animal cells. This is in common with other tests of this kind, including commercially available pregnancy tests.

Is the LFD test safe for those that are pregnant?

Yes, the tests are safe to use by those who are pregnant.