

Lateral Flow Testing: Frequently Asked Questions

Why are these tests being carried out?

To ensure as many young people as possible continue to receive high quality, face to face education; (not in national lockdown) and to break chains of transmission of the virus.

How will this actually help ensure face to face education?

This will help identify asymptomatic cases – which make up a third of all cases – limiting the spread of the virus.

Staff and pupils who are close contacts of cases will be eligible for daily testing, eliminating the need for immediate self-isolation. Only if a daily test returns a positive result will the staff member need to isolate. This means fewer staff members will need to isolate, ensuring they can continue teaching, and fewer pupils/students will need to isolate, enabling them to attend.

What type of test will be used?

Lateral flow tests will be used in the first instance. These deliver a result in 30 minutes. If it is negative then pupils and teachers will be able to carry on as usual. If it's positive then they will have to isolate and get a second test that will be processed in a laboratory.

Does that mean the lateral flow tests aren't conclusive?

There is a low chance of false positive tests – that is why the secondary test is necessary. There is also a low chance that lateral flow tests don't pick up positive cases because they aren't as sensitive as lab-based tests. That is why there will be serial tests for close contacts of positive cases – they will be tested repeatedly over a number of days to ensure they are not positive.

Does my child have to have testing?

Currently a third of COVID cases are asymptomatic meaning that your child could be carrying the virus, spreading it to others and not be aware. By regularly testing the students who are in school, we will be able to quickly identify these students and staff and ensure that isolate quickly helping to support the national effort to control the virus. Secondly, we are aware that there has had to be a large number of quarantine periods for students where they have had to isolate following close contact with a confirmed case. Daily testing of students who have been close contacts with a confirmed case will allow students to remain in school.

Does my child have to have testing?

No. This is a parental choice. However, should your child be in close contact with a confirmed case and not have consent for testing, they will have to be sent home from school and isolate for 10 days following government guidelines.

Where will the testing take place?

The testing will take place in the school gymnasium in booths which have been set up to give those being tested some privacy to conduct the test. This area will be regularly sanitised.

Who will do the testing?

The actual test will be conducted by your child with advice and supervision from our staff. The processing of the test and results will be conducted by staff who have completed the relevant training.

What happens to my child's results?

Your child's results will be sent directly to the email/telephone number that you have given to us.

What happens if my child tests positive?

You will receive the results via text and trace email or text. School will also contact you immediately to come and collect your child to start their self-isolation period. Your child will also be given a home testing kit to be completed and posted.

What happens if my child is a close contact of someone who tests positive?

Your child can still come to school whilst they continue to test negative. The test will be conducted daily for 7 days after the close contact. They will then return to their normal weekly testing. If you do not wish your child to be tested daily, as a close contact, they will need to remain in isolation at home for 10 days.

How often will my child be tested?

Initially your child will be tested on Monday 18th January 2021. They will then be tested again within 3-5 days. Providing that these tests are negative, they will then be tested on a weekly basis.

What if my child is incapable of using the self-testing swab?

Staff have been trained to support and assist your child through all aspects of the swabbing process. However, if your child is unable to complete this independently or becomes distressed, the test will not be done in school and you may be asked to take your child for a test outside of school.

What if my child has already tested positive for COVID 19 at an earlier date?

Your child can still take part in the testing programme.