

18th March 2021

Dear parents and carers,

Re: Home Testing

Regular asymptomatic (no symptoms) COVID-19 testing has been in place for all staff at school since January. As pupils have returned to school and if we have consent, they have completed 3 lateral flow device (LFD) tests. Those in-school tests are now complete and we are ready to roll out home testing.

[The Government has recently announced that](#) all secondary aged students will also be offered regular asymptomatic COVID-19 tests to take at home. All secondary aged students will be offered tests to take at home twice a week, so that we can reduce the spread of the virus.

Up to one in three people who have COVID-19 can spread the virus without knowing. This is because they have no symptoms. To reduce the spread of the virus, we need to identify those individuals. We can do this by carrying out tests at home twice every week.

Taking test kits home

The first set of test kits will be given out on Monday 22nd March. We would like pupils to take their tests before school on Mondays and Thursdays. If it is easier, tests can be taken last thing on a Sunday and last Wednesdays evening. We will give students a leaflet with instructions on how to do the test with the kit. There is also a useful video to show you how to take the test [here](#).

Testing pupils/students at home

Many children will adapt to testing becoming part of their routine, others will find it more challenging. Taking part in testing is voluntary and all children will be able to attend school whether they take part or not. We hope that the option to take the test in the morning **or** the evening will support families to test at home.

Tests kits will be collected from school. Tests are free of charge. Pupils will receive a pack of 7 tests in a box with a leaflet on how to take the test and report the results.

The result of each test needs to be reported using the NHS Test & Trace self-report website:

<https://www.gov.uk/report-covid19-result>. Parents and carers will also need to tell the school the result of each test by completing the following MS Form:

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=hVh-eMTdU0WnV6udzkyo6lpr1Q9ztlhBvW7RNkHV3MdUNEgxQzJVUVIjNDdPUjNKVEQyTkNQRkNSQy4u>

If a pupil has a positive test result, they will need to stay home and self-isolate. If the result of the test is unclear (void) they will need to do another one. Pupils have the option to take the test and report the evening before school, but no earlier.



Can pupils take the test themselves?

Students aged 18 and over should do the test themselves and report the result, with help if they need it. Students aged 12-17 should do the test themselves with adult supervision. The adult may help the pupil to take the test if they need support. Students aged 11 must be tested by an adult and the adult must report the result.

Testing for parents, households and bubbles twice a week

A reminder that regular rapid testing is now also available for parents, their households and support or childcare bubbles. The government is encouraging all families to participate in twice weekly testing to help stop the spread.

Parents and other adults in the household can access tests by:

- Ordering tests online www.gov.uk/order-school-household-tests
- Getting an assisted test at work, if it is available
- Attending a test site to get tested (where you will be able to see how to take the test) or pick up tests to do at home.

To find out more on school household testing visit [Households and bubbles of pupils, students and staff of schools and colleges: get rapid lateral flow tests - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/households-and-bubbles-of-pupils-students-and-staff-of-schools-and-colleges-get-rapid-lateral-flow-tests)

Testing over Easter

Your child should also continue testing twice a week, at home, throughout the Easter school holidays. We will be sending home extra kits for Easter holiday before term ends.

Taking part

Taking part in testing is voluntary and all pupils will be able to attend school whether they take part in testing or not.

We are strongly encouraging all pupils to take part in the national testing programme.

Please contact Mr Godfrey (our testing coordinator) via enquiry@decschool.co.uk if you have any questions or concerns about home testing.

Thank you for your support.

Yours sincerely

Mr M Dunn
Head Teacher

Some frequently asked questions

What type of tests will be used?

We will be sending home Lateral Flow Device (LFD) tests. They are a fast and simple way to test people who do not have symptoms of COVID-19, but who may still be spreading the virus.

The tests are easy to use and give results in 30 minutes.

Further information: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/understanding-lateral-flow-antigen-testing-for-people-without-symptoms>

Are LFD tests accurate?

Lateral Flow Devices identify people who are likely to be infectious. These individuals tend to spread the virus to many people and so identifying them through this test is important.

These 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). The speed and convenience of the tests supports the detection of the virus in asymptomatic individuals, who would not otherwise have got tested.

The tests are highly specific, with low chance of false positives. They are also very sensitive and are able to identify the majority of the most infectious yet asymptomatic individuals. Extensive evaluation has been carried out on the tests and it shows that they are both accurate and sensitive enough to be used in the community for screening and surveillance purposes.

It is important to remember that these tests are only an aid to help stop the spread of the virus and you should continue to follow other guidance such as on wearing face coverings and social distancing.

How are LFD tests different to PCR tests?

There are 2 main types of test to check if you have coronavirus:

- polymerase chain reaction (PCR) tests check for the genetic material (RNA) of the virus in the sample - you send the sample for processing at a lab
- lateral flow device (LFD) tests detect proteins called 'antigens' produced by the virus - LFD tests give rapid results, in 30 minutes after taking the test.

How will personal information and test results be shared?

When pupils take a Lateral Flow test, they need to report the result. This is so that their test result can be traced, which means that they need to share some information about the pupil.



They will need to tell the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC):

- child's name
- child's test result
- the reference number on the test Kit

They will also need to tell the school or college their test result.

Under UK law, a child's school or college can collect and store test result data because it is in the 'public interest'.

Schools and colleges will only share information with the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) if the test kits used are found to be faulty. If this happens, DHSC will use our information to contact people who used the faulty tests, so that they can be tested again.

When someone reports test results online, they are sharing information with DHSC. DHSC may share the information with your GP, local government, NHS, and Public Health England. This is so that they can offer health services and guidance if someone needs to self-isolate. They might also use data anonymously (a person's name or contact information) to research COVID-19, and improve our understanding of the virus.

For more information on how personal data is used for testing please see the detailed privacy notice on our website.

What if a child cannot tolerate a swab down their throat, perhaps due to their disability?

A child or young person may find it difficult to take a throat swab due, for example, to their having difficulty in understanding instructions, needing to keep their mouth open during the period of swabbing or they are having a strong gag reflex. In such cases, where a combined nose and throat swab is not possible, a nose swab from both nostrils can be taken. Similarly, if a nasal swab is not feasible, a throat swab alone will suffice.

[Help and support is available](#) for students, parents and carers, including instructions in different languages on how to test and report the results and a video showing you how to take the test.

