



What are the objectives of the Government's asymptomatic testing strategy in education settings? As many as one in three people who contract the virus show no symptoms (they are asymptomatic), so could be spreading the disease unknowingly. Asymptomatic testing helps to identify positive cases more quickly and break the chains of transmission. Those who test positive will self-isolate, helping to reduce transmission of the virus. The asymptomatic testing programme does not replace the Government's current testing policy for those with symptoms. If you have symptoms, you should continue to book a test via <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/> or by calling 119 in England.

What are the Government's testing plans for schools/ colleges in the autumn term?

Secondary schools and colleges should reinstate a full on-site Asymptomatic Testing Site (ATS) and offer **two** tests on-site per student (3-5 days apart) before continuing regular testing at home. This will help to identify cases and stop transmission to support the return to education – particularly as most students will not be testing for a long period over the summer and will need to re-establish the habit of regular twice weekly testing. It will also give new pupils and students the opportunity to get used to swabbing in a supervised environment before moving to twice weekly testing at home.

A pupil/student's first test at an on-site (ATS) should be as soon as possible after they arrive at school or college and they will be allowed to continue face to face learning if they test negative after that first test. If they test positive, they will need to go home and self-isolate in line with government guidance.

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.

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.

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

Yes. Current public health guidance is that regular testing should continue in settings that remain open, even for those who have been fully vaccinated. The need for regular asymptomatic testing in education settings will be reviewed at the end of September.

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

If a pupil, student or member of staff conducts a LFD test at home or receives a supervised school/college-based LFD test as part of the rapid asymptomatic testing programme, and it is positive then they should self-isolate immediately in line with NHS Test and Trace guidance. From 16 August 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 social distancing or other 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 you have recently (within 90 days) had a positive PCR test for COVID-19, you 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.