**Coronavirus (COVID-19) Asymptomatic testing in schools and colleges**

This guidance is for:

* All schools including special schools, independent schools and alternative provision settings.
* Further education colleges including general colleges, sixth form colleges and specialist colleges.

**Introduction**

To safeguard the health of the profession and keep as many staff and pupils in school as possible; we will be making rapid-result coronavirus tests available to schools and colleges in the new year.

Testing will be made available to every member of staff and the entire school and college student and pupil populations with a phased approach beginning in January.

**Approach**

At the beginning of January tests will be provided for:

1. The secondary school and college workforce to conduct weekly testing; this will help identify those who are carrying the virus without displaying symptoms, reducing the risk of transmission. This will be coupled with daily testing, for 7-days, for those identified as close contacts of workforce colleagues that have tested positive; this will mean that staff can continue coming into school and college as normal, rather than having to self-isolate, as before.
2. Daily serial testing for students in secondary school years 11 to 13 and their college equivalents if they are identified as a contact. This ensures that these year groups do not need to isolate and are able to continue to benefit from high quality, face to face education in this critical exam year.

As soon as possible after this initial phase, testing will be available for all other secondary and FE students who are identified as a contact.

From the start of February, tests will be provided to allow weekly testing for the primary school workforce and serial testing if they are identified as a contact.

After half term (or once at-home testing is approved) we will offer serial testing of all primary pupils who are identified as a contact.

For every group, testing is voluntary, but close contacts who decide not to be tested daily will need to self-isolate in line with the [Stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection).

**Conducting testing in schools and colleges**

Recent pilots have shown how rapid testing can be used effectively and have positive impacts in schools and colleges. The Lateral Flow Tests (LFTs) that will be provided to schools and colleges produce a result in 30 minutes and do not require a laboratory to be processed or administration by clinically trained members of staff.

From 4 January, schools and colleges will be provided with all of the testing kit including PPE. We will provide you with comprehensive guidance and training materials and support you to introduce a testing programme that works for your workforce and your student/pupil population.