

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS ON COVID-19 TESTING IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS AND FURTHER EDUCATION COLLEGES



Please **STAY AT HOME** if your child or anyone in your household has symptoms of coronavirus. Symptoms are:

- A high temperature
- A new, continuous cough
- A loss of, or change to, your sense of smell or taste

Why is COVID-19 testing important?

We know that around 1 in 3 people with COVID-19 don't have any symptoms, but can still pass the virus on.

Testing of staff and pupils who **do not** have symptoms is a vital part of keeping our schools and communities safe because people without symptoms could be carrying the virus and may spread it to others. Parents and other adult household members of staff and pupils can also get tested twice a week.

What is rapid testing?

- Simple and quick tests, known as Lateral Flow Device (LFD) tests are used to test people, without the need for a laboratory
- Rapid testing is **really effective**, alongside other COVID-19 safety measures
- To do the test, you wipe a swab (like a cotton bud) at the back of your throat and up your nose. It is a bit uncomfortable, but it does not hurt
- Swabbing and processing of the tests will be done in a safe space in the school or college and can then routinely be done at home and the results are available in around 30 minutes

How frequent are the tests?

- All secondary pupils and students, on their return to secondary schools and FE colleges, should do three COVID-19 tests 3 – 5 days apart
- Once pupils have been tested 3 times at school, they will be provided with home test kits for regular testing
- All school staff will be tested twice a week

Adult members of a household, childcare bubble or support bubble of staff or a pupil will be able to get twice-weekly testing if they have **no symptoms**. These will be available:

- through your employer (if they offer testing to employees)
- at a local community test site
- by ordering a home test kit online
- collecting from a local testing site (information to follow).

To learn more about staff household members testing visit : www.gov.uk/guidance/rapid-lateral-flow-testing-for-households-and-bubbles-of-school-pupils-and-staff

What do parents need to know?

Participating is **voluntary** but strongly encouraged (Parents will need to give their consent for children under the age of 16).

Testing in schools

Students will be given the test kit and will do the test themselves. It is quick and easy. In some cases, younger children or children with special needs may be helped by a trained member of staff.

Testing at home

Pupils in secondary schools will be supplied with LFD test kits to self-swab and test themselves twice a week at home. Adult members of their household can get tested at local community testing sites (collection points will be available soon).

If the result is negative, the child/student can go into school but will still need to follow public health measures

What happens when a child tests positive?

For most people their symptoms will be mild or they will have no symptoms at all.

If a child tests positive at school, the staff doing the testing will find a **quiet space** to talk with the pupil or student, being mindful of the need for social distancing/PPE.

The school will call their parent or legal guardian and arrange for the pupil to be collected or for permission to travel home safely on their own. They must avoid using public transport and should walk or cycle. If this is not possible, (for example if there is a long journey or if the child has complex needs) the parent can arrange for private hire taxi with a screen.

The child or family may be anxious about their health and impact on their family and they will be reassured about the risks.

If the test was done at home they will also need to arrange a lab-based polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test to confirm the result. Get a test at www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test or by calling **119**

In both cases, if a child tests positive:

- The child **and their close contacts** will be required to self-isolate for 10 days in line with the **stay-at-home guidance**
 - If any of the close contacts go on to develop symptoms should stay at home and get a test
 - Get a test on www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test or by calling **119**
 - If anyone tests positive whilst not experiencing symptoms but develop symptoms during the isolation period, they must restart the 10 day isolation period from the day they developed symptoms
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Getting support if you need to self-isolate

There is support available with learning from home and support for their parents with work and benefits. Call the 'We are Islington' helpline on **020 7527 8222** or minicom on **020 7527 1900**. Lines are open every day from 9am to 5pm.

You can also contact your school with any questions or concerns about coronavirus. For example if you are from a Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic group or if there are grandparents or vulnerable family members at home.

School nurses: email whh-tr.IslingtonSchoolNursing@nhs.net or ring **020 3316 8021**