

Inspire Education Group – Plan for Asymptomatic Testing

This guide has been written using the Department for Education and NHS Test and Trace Public FAQ's – Asymptomatic testing in schools and colleges.

QUICK SUMMARY

- The College is introducing rapid testing for Covid-19 (called the 'LFD antigen test') to help protect the health and safety of staff and students
- Students will register for this rapid testing with their tutor's help as soon as they return to college in March
- Students will do two rapid tests under supervision within college, before moving on to twice-weekly self-testing at home
- **If you receive a positive result from an onsite rapid LFD antigen test or are deemed to be a close contact of a positive case, you will need to self-isolate**
- If you receive a positive result from an 'at home' LFD antigen test you will need to book a more specialist test through the national Test and Trace System by dialling 119. **The specialist test is called a 'PCR test'**
- This guide provides detailed information about the LFD antigen testing process. Students will be guided through this process by their course tutor and specialist staff

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 will help to identify positive cases more quickly and break the chain of transmission. Those who test positive will self-isolate, helping to reduce transmission of the virus.

Alongside asymptomatic testing, secondary schools and colleges should also continue to put in place a range of protective measures to minimise the risk of infection spread, and twice weekly testing for staff and pupils will also increase their confidence in the workplace. No test is perfect, but the speed and convenience of antigen LFD tests supports detection of the virus in asymptomatic individuals who would not otherwise be tested.

All existing protective measures set out in guidance (e.g. social distancing, handwashing, face coverings where needed, curriculum bubbles) remain important and the need for these is not lessened. A negative antigen LFD result should not be read as a means to relax or ignore social distancing or other virus prevention measures intended to reduce transmission – antigen LFD is an additional tool that contributes to reducing risk.

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.

Inspire Education Group Plan for testing

Rapid testing using antigen LFD's will support the return to education by helping to identify people who are infectious but do not have any coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms.

Schools and colleges have the flexibility to consider how best to deliver testing on a phased basis, depending on their circumstances and local arrangements.

Staff

All staff will be able to use home testing kits for regular testing. Guidance will be supplied with these kits so individuals will know how to conduct the test as well as how to register their result both with the college and with NHS online.

Students

Students will be able to use home testing kits once they have safely administered two onsite tests. During the weeks commencing 8 March and 15 March, full time students will be offered two asymptomatic tests on site. Students will arrive on campus and go to their timetabled room. Each course group will be allocated a time slot at some point during their first day and the tutor will support students to complete the pre-registration process and then escort the group to the testing site for their allocated time slot.

Undertaking two on site tests should give students the opportunity to get used to swabbing in a supervised environment first. Students will then be provided with home test kits for regular twice weekly testing from week commencing 22 March 2021.

We will continue to offer a small number of onsite tests for those students with special educational needs (SEN) and if you wish to access this onsite testing you must request this through your SEN contact or your tutor.

Some students on adult and higher education programmes, including apprentices will return to college as part of a blended delivery model for onsite face to face teaching. Course requirements will be looked at on an individual basis. Learning will continue online where specialist resources are not required. Any student that returns to college will have the opportunity to participate in an onsite LFD Test before moving to home testing. All students will receive communication from their Head of Faculty / Department to confirm if and when they are to return to campus.

On-site Asymptomatic Testing Sites (ATS) testing

How will registration work?

Students who participate in onsite LFD testing will complete an online registration both for the college and NHS system. The registration process will happen in their

classroom with the support of their tutor, prior to attending the college testing site. This will help manage the significant number of students we have to test. We are developing an online system with a step by step guide to enable this to happen as efficiently as possible.

How the onsite tests work

Those taking the test will be supervised by trained staff. The lateral flow tests are quick and easy to undertake, using a swab of the nose and throat. If a positive case is identified the internal track and trace team will sensitively and swiftly identify the individual and close contacts that require to self-isolate. All individuals will also receive a text/email notification of a positive or negative result from the online NHS system.

What happens if an individual tests positive on site?

If an individual tests positive on a lateral flow device, they will need to go home and self-isolate for 10 days and follow the guidance from NHS Test and Trace. The college on-site track and trace team will notify the individual and close contacts will be identified and they will also need to self-isolate. This will be undertaken sensitively and swiftly. Where appropriate parents will be contacted to collect students as soon as possible.

What happens if a parent is unable to collect a student who has tested positive?

If a student displays coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, or has a positive Lateral Flow test, while at the college they should avoid using public transport and, wherever possible, be collected by a member of their family or household or if it is safe and practical to do so they should walk or cycle home. If this is not possible alternative arrangements may be able to be organised by the college.

If a student is awaiting collection they will be moved, if possible, to a room where they can be isolated with appropriate adult supervision if required. A window should be opened for fresh air ventilation if it is safe to do so. If it is not possible to isolate the student they will be moved to an area which is at least 2 metres away from other people.

If they need to go to the bathroom while waiting to be collected, they should use a separate bathroom if possible - the bathroom must be cleaned and disinfected using standard cleaning products before being used by anyone else. Personal protective equipment (PPE) must be worn by staff caring for the student while they await collection if a distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained (such as for a student with complex needs)

What happens if the test is negative?

While a small number of students may need to repeat the test if the first test was invalid or void for some reason, students who test negative will be able to stay in college and resume their activities as normal. Students will be informed of negative test results via text/email from the online NHS system.

What if staff or students have been in close contact with someone in college who tests positive?

The staff member or student will be notified that they are a close contact and will need to self-isolate for 10 days in line with Government guidance.

Home testing

When should staff and students carry out their home test?

Staff will be using home tests week commencing 8 March 2021 and students will move to home testing week commencing 22 March 2021. When home testing, students and staff should test twice weekly before coming into college, ideally in the morning.

Detailed information how to self-swab and process the test is in the Instructions for Use and there is an NHS video demonstrating how to carry out a test <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLvaBZskxS7tzQYIVg7lwH5uxAD9UrSzGJ>

In addition, a detailed How to Guide for home testing, is available https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1jYv0MjFyI1bZgPn_1S10OuRqfrj_b5_P

How will test results get recorded when the college moves to home testing?

When testing at home, the college will not automatically find out if a staff member or student has taken a test. Staff or students (or the parent) are required to report the test result via the NHS Online reporting system for both negative, void and positive test results. They should also report positive, negative and void results to the college. If the result is positive, the individual should isolate, and the college will help with contact tracing. They will also need to arrange a lab-based polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test through the national Test and Trace system to confirm the result if the test was done at home.

Those with a negative antigen LFD test result can continue to attend college and use protective measures.

We are developing an online system to enable students and staff to register and to report their home test results.

What record keeping does the college need to do?

Colleges are required to keep a test kit log, where they record which individual has taken which kits home. This is required in the unlikely event of an incident requiring investigation or batch recall. This log will also help record that staff and students have received the new instructions for use.

Colleges are also encouraged to keep a record of staff and student tests results. This will help with contact tracing, since colleges cannot view staff or student results otherwise.

The individual is also required to record and share their result (whether positive, negative or void) with NHS Test and Trace.

Why do I need to share information on antigen LFD test results both with NHS Test & Trace and my college?

It is a requirement to share results with NHS Test & Trace so that contact tracing (particularly outside the college environment can take place) and clinical evaluation of the testing programme can continue. Staff and students should share results with the college so that, if their test is positive, immediate contact tracing can take place.

Void and negative results are useful information both to monitor stocks of kits and to identify any issues that might need escalating to Department for Education or NHS Test & Trace.

Can my family get tested too?

On Sunday 28 February, the [Department of Health and Social Care announced](#) that from Monday 1 March, households with primary school, secondary school and college age children, including childcare and support bubbles, can test themselves twice every week at home as schools and colleges return from Monday 8 March.

Households, childcare and support bubbles of primary, secondary and college staff can also be tested. Twice-weekly testing will also be offered to adults working in the wider school community, including bus drivers and after school club leaders.

The twice-weekly test kits can be accessed:

- via employers if they offer testing to employees
- at a local test site
- by collecting a home test kit from a test site
- by ordering a home test kit online

This [guidance](#) provides information on who can be tested and how you can get a test.

The home test kits given out by the college should only be used by staff and students. Staff and students must follow the registration and reporting process as detailed in this guide. The tests will be handed to staff and students for personal use and should not be used for anyone else. If family members experience COVID-19 symptoms, they must follow standard Government guidance, including self-isolating immediately and booking a test through the NHS Coronavirus (COVID 19) service or by calling 119 (England and Wales).

Should someone who has been vaccinated take an antigen LFD test?

Yes, we do not yet know whether vaccines prevent individuals transmitting the virus. The vaccine does not interfere with the antigen LFD or PCR tests.

Consent

Do you need consent to process the personal data required for testing?

All students will need to complete a consent form to be tested on-site. Consent is obtained for home testing when you conduct the test yourself at home. The consent form will be issued to all students along with the Inspire Education Group Privacy Notice. These documents will be available through the onsite system we are developing and you will be able to access this from the student intranet.

Who requires parental consent?

Students under 16 years old require a parent/guardian to consent to their being tested on-site. Students aged 16 or older may consent themselves using the consent form. Young people with SEND aged 16-25 years old do not need parent/guardian consent, provided that they are able to make the decision for themselves.

Any staff member, student, or pupil who does not take part in testing will still be able to attend school or college unless they develop symptoms or have been in close contact with anyone with a positive result.

Test process

What happens if a student or staff member's antigen lateral flow test result is positive?

Individuals who return a positive antigen LFD test result must self-isolate immediately in line with NHS Test and Trace guidance. They should also inform the college of the positive result and must order a confirmatory PCR test if they are testing at home (confirmatory PCR tests are not needed if the test was conducted through an on-site ATS). To book a PCR test click on this link <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/> or call 119.

Should I still take part in the asymptomatic testing programme if I have recently tested positive for COVID-19?

If you have tested positive by PCR for COVID-19, you will probably have developed some immunity to the disease. However, it cannot be guaranteed that everyone will develop immunity, or how long it will last. It is possible for PCR tests to remain positive for some time after COVID-19 infection. Anyone who has previously received a positive COVID-19 PCR test result should not be re-tested within 90 days of that test, unless they develop any new symptoms of COVID-19.

If, however, you do have an antigen LFD test within 90 days of a previous positive COVID-19 PCR test, for example as part of a workplace or community testing programme, and the result of this test is positive, you and your household should self-isolate.

If it is more than 90 days since you tested positive by PCR for COVID-19, and you have new symptoms of COVID-19, or a positive antigen LFD or PCR test, you will need to self-isolate.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities - SEND

What about students with SEND who will not be able to manage a self-swab?

Support for students who are unable to self-swab will be available via the Personal Care team. This is for students whose physical and health needs prevent them from administering their own test. If you are a student who is unable to manage a self-swab or a parent of a student who is unable to manage a self-swab please contact your SEN link and individual arrangements can be made. It may be more appropriate to move immediately to home testing.

Miscellaneous Questions

Do test results get affected by brushing teeth, drinking water?

Avoid eating or drinking half an hour before the test. A small amount of water is acceptable. There is unlikely to be an adverse impact of brushing teeth prior to testing but it might be prudent to wait a while before testing.

Are the swabs latex free?

The manufacturer has confirmed that Innova swabs are latex free.

Does the LFD test contain any harmful substances and are there any precautions for dealing with spillages?

Extraction solution which comes with the LFD test kit contains the following components: Na_2HPO_4 (disodium hydrogen phosphate), NaH_2PO_4 (sodium phosphate monobasic), NaCl (Sodium Chloride). These components do not have any hazard labels associated with them, and the manufacturer states that there are no hazards anticipated if individuals follow the instructions for use.

Any spillages should be wiped with a paper towel and if the solution included the throat and nose sample, the area should be appropriately disinfected using household disinfectant.

Do the LFD tests contain animal products, or have they been tested on animals?

All of the antibodies are necessarily generated from animal cells. While we do not test any of these products on animals, nor are animals harmed in the development process, the antibodies used for the test reaction are derived using an animal cell in the laboratory. The T line for a positive test is derived by reaction between the sample as it flows to the membrane (thin paper like material inside the device) which is coated with these antibodies.

It is therefore highly unlikely for there to be any direct contact between the person being tested and the animal material itself. However, we want to make sure that the people undertaking the test make an informed choice about this.

Are the LFD tests vegan?

The monoclonal antibody technology present in our lateral flow devices are generated from animal cells. During development, at no time have any component parts been tested on animals.

Are the LFD tests halal?

No animal products have been used in the production of the swabs. The swab is the only material with which the individual will come into direct contact. The individual using the test will not come into direct contact with any materials made from animal products. The thin paper like material inside the LFD is coated with antibodies from animal cells. No direct contact will be made between the person and this material. The monoclonal antibody technology present in our lateral flow devices are generated from animal cells. This is in common with other tests of this kind, including commercially available pregnancy tests.

Is the LFD test safe for those that are pregnant?

Yes, the tests are safe to use by those who are pregnant.