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Dear Parent/Carer

COVID-19 - Home Testing

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

Testing students at home

All students will be given lateral flow test kits (inside a sealed envelope) to take home. If you do not want your child to participate then please ask them to return the package to Reception.

We would like them to take their tests before school/college on a Monday and Thursday (or Sunday evening /Wednesday evening if that works better for you).

Tests are of course free of charge and come in a sealed box with a leaflet on how to take the test and report the results.

Taking the home test

Some of you will be familiar with the throat and nose test kit - it has a blue and white pack.

We are now transitioning to a **nose-only** test kit - these are:

- green and white pack (Orient Gene);
- blue and white pack (ACON Flowflex).

Please check which pack you have and follow the instructions, as it may be different to one you've had before. There is also a useful video to show you [how to take the test](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/covid-19-self-test-help) (www.gov.uk/guidance/covid-19-self-test-help) and how to report it.

You can put the completed test in your normal bin, as it is classed as household waste, even if it is positive.

Symptomatic testing

Home testing does not replace symptomatic testing. If your child has symptoms, they should isolate immediately, book a [PCR test](http://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test) (www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test) and follow [national guidelines](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/symptoms) (www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/symptoms).

What you should do after the test

Anyone with a **positive** test result will need to:

- isolate in line with the [stay at home guidance](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection) (www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection);
- [book a further test](http://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test) (www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test) - a lab-based PCR test will confirm the result.

Whilst awaiting the PCR result, your child should continue to self-isolate.

If the PCR test is taken within the 2 days following the positive lateral flow result, and is negative, it overrides the lateral flow self-test and your child can return to school, so long as they do not have COVID-19 symptoms.

If you are fully vaccinated or aged under 18 years and 6 months, you will **not** be required to self-isolate if you live in the same household as someone with COVID-19. Please see the [stay at home guidance](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection) for more information (www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection).

If the result of the test is unclear (**void**) you should do another test.

A negative result does not guarantee that your child is not carrying the virus. They should continue to follow social distancing and other measures to reduce transmission such as regularly washing/sanitising their hands.

If you or anyone in your household gets symptoms of the virus you should follow [national guidelines](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/symptoms/) (www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/symptoms/) on self-isolation and testing.

You need to report each test result

The result of each test needs to be reported using the NHS Test & Trace self-report website: www.gov.uk/report-covid19-result.

You will also need to tell the school the result if the test is positive.

Why take part?

Taking part in testing is voluntary and all students will be able to attend school whether they take part in testing or not. You provide consent at the point of undertaking the test.

We strongly encourage students to take part, as testing at home is a key line of defence in reducing transmission in the community and it will help to enable your child and other students to attend school as safely as possible.

Please contact Steve Green, our COVID Co-ordinator, if you have any questions or concerns about home testing (sgreen@looea.net).

Household testing

We only have sufficient stocks to provide students with home test kits. However, kits are available to all households, these can be collected from a pharmacy or ordered online: www.gov.uk/order-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-tests.

Thank you for your support.

Yours faithfully



Mr Scott Yalden
Headteacher

Enclosure:

1. Frequently asked questions.

Some frequently asked questions

Do I need to give consent?

Students and parents do not give written consent to take part in the home testing programme. Please read the information below on how personal information and test results are shared and the [privacy notice](#) on our website.

At the point of doing the test you are giving consent. Once you open the kit you should take the test and report the result to [NHS Test & Trace](#), whether positive, negative, or void. If the test is positive, you should also inform the school (parentcontact@looea.net).

Can my child take the test themselves?

Students aged 12-17 should do the test themselves, with adult supervision. The adult may help them to take the test if they need support.

Students aged 11 must be tested by an adult and the adult must report the result.

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 within a few minutes (some kits are 15 minutes, some are 30 minutes - please follow the instructions, being mindful that we are transitioning from nose and throat kits to nose only).

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, but 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 15-30 minutes after taking the test.

What does it mean if my child has a positive result?

Anyone with a positive test result will need to:

- self-isolate in line with the [stay at home guidance](#)
- [book a further test](#) (a lab-based polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test) to confirm the result, whether the test was done at home, school or college

While awaiting the PCR result, the individual should continue to self-isolate.

If the PCR test is taken within the 2 days following the positive LFD result, and is negative, it overrides the self-test LFD test and your child can return to school, as long as they don't have COVID-19 symptoms.

If you are fully vaccinated or aged under 18 years and 6 months, you will **not** be required to self-isolate if you live in the same household as someone with COVID-19.

Please refer to [Stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection](#) for more information.

What does it mean if my child has a negative result?

A negative result does not guarantee that your child is not carrying the virus. They should continue to follow measures to reduce transmission such as regularly washing hands and maintaining social distance wherever possible.

What if my child has a void result?

If the result of the test is unclear (void), they should take another one. If the next test is also void, your child should take a PCR test. You can [book a test here](#).

All test results need to be reported to [NHS Test & Trace](#). In addition, positive results need to be reported to the school.

Do I need to send the test to a lab?

No. The LFDs supplied do not need to be sent to a laboratory to get a result and can give a quick result in 15-30 minutes (depending on the brand). Guidance on self-testing is contained in the 'Instructions for Use' leaflet, which comes with the test kit - please follow this carefully, as the quality of the test is paramount in detecting cases and stemming the transmission. There is also a useful video to show you how to take the test [here](#).

How do you report the result?

You can report the result of the test (whether it is positive, negative or void) using this online [service](#). You also need to tell the school if it is a positive result. You will receive a text or email from NHS Test & Trace confirming that you have reported your test result.

Can I or someone else in my household use a test kit sent home from school?

No. However your household members can test themselves twice every week at home. This testing can be accessed through the following channels:

- collect tests to do at home. Find your nearest collection site [COVID Test Finder \(test-and-trace.nhs.uk\)](#)
- get a rapid test at work, through workplace testing - ask your employer for more information

- attend 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 (you can find your nearest test site via the postcode checker www.gov.uk/find-covid-19-lateral-flow-test-site or check your local council website)

If these options are not possible, there will be a supply of rapid tests for order online - more information can be found on www.gov.uk/order-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-tests

Reporting problems or issues with testing

If there is an issue with the test kit, for example something is missing, please report it by calling **119** and please also tell the school (parentcontact@looeca.net).

If an accident or injury happens whilst using the test kit, please seek medical care by calling 111 (or 999 if it is an emergency). Please also report what happened using this website: <https://coronavirus-yellowcard.mhra.gov.uk/>

How will personal information and test results be shared?

When your child takes a lateral flow test, you need to report the result. This is so that their test result can be traced, which means that you need to share some information about your child. You need to tell NHS Test & Trace:

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

You will also need to tell your child's school if their test result is positive.

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

This means that your child's data helps us to stop the spread of the virus, and to keep your children in school. For example, we will tell your child to self-isolate if they get a positive test result.

Schools 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. This will ensure that testing is accurate and helps keep us all safe.

When you report test results online, you are sharing information with DHSC. They may share the information with your GP, local government, NHS, and Public Health England. This is so that they can offer your family health services and guidance if your child needs to self-isolate. They might also use your child's data anonymously (without their name or contact information) to research COVID-19, to improve our understanding of the virus. For more information on how personal data is used for testing please see the [privacy notice](#) on our website.