

GUIDANCE

Guidance for schools and FE providers: using home test kits

This guidance is intended to support schools, settings and FE providers in offering home test kits.

First published:
2 September 2020

Last updated:
2 September 2020

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Overview

It is essential that any pupil, teacher or staff member who have COVID-19 symptoms, or who share a household with someone who has symptoms, does not attend the school / setting and follows the self-isolation guidance and access a test at a testing site or at home using the [online booking portal](#).

The main symptoms of COVID-19 are:

- a high temperature: this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)
- a new, continuous cough: this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)
- a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste: this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal

In July we set out a commitment that by the autumn, all schools and FE providers will be provided with a small number of home testing kits to complement these main access routes. From 3 September onwards, all schools, settings and FE providers will receive an initial supply of 10 home test kits. Home test kits should only be offered to individuals in the exceptional circumstance that you believe an individual may have barriers to accessing testing elsewhere.

The best and fastest way for students or staff to access a test is to visit a testing site.

Purpose

This guidance is intended to support schools, settings and FE providers in offering home test kits. This commitment applies to all mainstream, PRUs, special, alternative provision and FE providers. It should be read alongside the rest of this guidance document.

Usual testing options

We recommend testing for those with a continuous cough, fever, or loss of or change in the sense of taste or smell.

If an individual has other cold-like symptoms, such as a runny nose, they do not need to be tested or to self-isolate.

When advising FE students to get tested, or advising parents/carers to get a school pupil tested you should advise them of the points below. You cannot require a child, young person or member of staff to get a test.

Booking a free coronavirus (COVID-19) test is done through the [online booking portal](#). This will then give you a range of testing options available in your local area. These will usually be:

- Test centre - Booking a test at a drive-in test centre is likely to be the fastest way to get a test. You should be aware of local test centres in order to advise staff, students and parents/carers.
- Home test kit – Staff, parents/carers and FE students can order a home test kit for themselves or up to three members of their household.

New ways to make accessing a test as quick and easy as possible are being added continually by NHS Test, Trace, Protect. Walk in local testing centres are shortly being opened in a number of locations. This network is continuing to expand to make it easier for people without cars to get a test.

Where these, or other testing options, are available in the local area, the portal will provide those options.

If a parent /carer, staff member or FE student does not have access to a computer or mobile phone/tablet, kits can also be ordered by calling 119. 119 can also be contacted for support at any point throughout the testing journey. 119 are able to provide support in up to 650 languages.

Individuals should self-isolate until they receive a negative result or, in the case of a positive result, for the period advised by the contact tracing team. You should ask parents/carers, FE students staff members to inform you immediately of the results of a test.

When to provide a test kit

Home test kits should only be offered in the exceptional circumstance that you believe an individual may have barriers to accessing testing elsewhere.

Anyone who displays symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) can and should get a test. The Welsh government is making it as easy as possible to get a test through a wide range of routes that are locally accessible, fast and convenient.

These testing routes are set out above, and should be used as the normal channels for accessing testing. If a child or staff member in your education setting becomes symptomatic, you should advise them to access testing through these routes.

However, in exceptional circumstances when you do not think a child or staff member would be able to access testing by these routes, you should consider using one of the provided home test kits to improve the chances that the individual will get tested.

Kits are suitable for people of all ages over the age of one. Members of staff should not carry out the sampling, parents/carers will be required to administer the test to those under 11. Full instructions on how to administer the test and what to do next are provided within each kit.

Kits should not be given directly to children; only to adults over the age of 18 or a child's parent/carer.

Kits should be stored securely at ambient room temperature (5-22°C).

Replenishment of test kits

Guidance on replenishment of kits will be published by DHSC shortly. Once this is published, you will be able to re-order these kits. There will be a cap on how many and how frequently orders can be placed, based on pupil numbers for your education setting. You will be provided with a unique organisation number (UON) in the email about your initial stock of home test kits. This will be needed to order replenishment kits.

| First published | Last updated |
|------------------|------------------|
| 2 September 2020 | 2 September 2020 |

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