



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

PUBLICATION

Routine testing for education and childcare staff

Guidance for education and childcare staff on twice weekly testing at home.

First published: 5 February 2021

Last updated: 5 February 2021

This document was downloaded from GOV.WALES and may not be the latest version.

Go to <https://gov.wales/routine-testing-education-and-childcare-staff.html> for the latest version.

Get [information on copyright](#).

Contents

[What is routine testing?](#)

[Who is eligible for the routine tests?](#)

[What is a Lateral Flow Test Device?](#)

[What is the difference between regular polymerise chain reaction \(PCR\) tests and Lateral Flow Tests?](#)

[Why are you asking education and childcare settings to undertake routine testing?](#)

[Is participation mandatory?](#)

[Are the tests provided free of charge?](#)

[How often should I take the test?](#)

[Do I have to take the test on the same days each week?](#)

[If I've previously had coronavirus or have received the coronavirus vaccine, should I still undertake twice weekly testing?](#)

[How will the testing work?](#)

[How accurate is a lateral flow device test?](#)

[How do I undertake the test?](#)

[What do I do if the result is positive?](#)

This document was downloaded from GOV.WALES and may not be the latest version.

Go to <https://gov.wales/routine-testing-education-and-childcare-staff-html> for the latest version.

Get [information on copyright](#).

What do I do if the result is negative?

How do I dispose of the test?

Can I use the test on a member of my family?

How do I receive the tests?

Why are children/learners not included in this testing approach?

What is routine testing?

All those working in education and registered childcare and play settings will have access to Lateral Flow Devices (LFDs). This enables them to undertake a test for coronavirus at home twice a week. The LFDs provide a result within 30 minutes and don't require a laboratory to process.

The test is for those who do not have coronavirus symptoms. If staff have coronavirus symptoms, they should **self-isolate** and arrange to have a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test (you can book **online** or by calling 119) and not use the LFD test.

Who is eligible for the routine tests?

All staff working in childcare and education settings are eligible for testing.

In education, this includes:

- primary schools
- secondary schools
- special schools
- independent schools
- independent specialist colleges

This document was downloaded from GOV.WALES and may not be the latest version.

Go to <https://gov.wales/routine-testing-education-and-childcare-staff-html> for the latest version.

Get [information on copyright](#).

- further education colleges
- middle schools
- pupil referral units

All registered childcare and play staff are eligible for testing, including those working in all roles at day care settings and childminders. This includes:

- full day care
- sessional care
- crèche's
- play groups/ cylchoedd meithrin
- staffed playwork provision
- Flying Start provision

Testing is voluntary, but individuals are strongly encouraged to take up the offer to further reduce the risk of asymptomatic transmission.

If staff have coronavirus symptoms, they should arrange to have a polymerise chain reaction (PCR) test you can book online or by calling 119) and not use the lateral flow device (LFD) test.

What is a Lateral Flow Test Device?

Lateral Flow (Antigen) testing involves the processing of nasal and throat swab samples with a Lateral Flow Device (LFD). The device, best described as looking like a home pregnancy test, detects a protein (antigen) produced by the virus. If present in the person's sample, a coloured line appears on the device that can be read between 20-30 minutes after processing.

What is the difference between regular polymerise chain reaction (PCR) tests and Lateral Flow Tests?

Both the RT-PCR test and lateral flow test require a swab to be taken from the

nose and throat. The RT-PCR is used for those who are experiencing symptoms and the swab is analysed in a lab.

Whereas, a lateral flow test is used for those not experiencing symptoms and the swab can be analysed using a lateral flow device at home, so the results can be returned within an hour. While LFDs are not as sensitive as lab-based RT-PCR tests, scientific advice has indicated that by testing more frequently with LFDs, their accuracy is on a par with RT-PCR tests and this is why we repeat the tests on a twice weekly basis.

Why are you asking education and childcare settings to undertake routine testing?

The Welsh Government are offering staff in education and childcare settings the opportunity to undergo twice weekly testing. Testing is voluntary, although all those offered the test are encouraged to take up the offer.

Education and childcare settings have implemented the control measures outlined in sector guidance to reduce the risk of transmission. The testing offer will enable settings to reduce this risk further by safeguarding against the transmission of the coronavirus by those who show no symptoms.

Recent pilots in Wales and the wider UK have shown how routine, rapid testing can be used effectively and have positive impacts in schools and other settings.

The routine test regime tests asymptomatic individuals – those who do not have coronavirus symptoms. If an asymptomatic person receives a positive test result via the routine testing (see further advice on a positive test below), they must self-isolate according to the guidance in order to prevent further transmission of the virus. In this way twice weekly testing identifies cases of coronavirus that would otherwise have not been found and helps to prevent the spread of coronavirus in the community.

While twice weekly testing help us prevent the spread in the community, it is important that settings continue to implement the control measures outlined in

the guidance specific to the settings to lessen the risk of transmission and likelihood of positive test results.

Is participation mandatory?

No. Staff who decline to participate in the testing offer are still be able to attend the workplace.

Once staff understand the testing process and have read a privacy notice, if they choose to participate they are committing to self-administer the test and provide their results. Education and childcare settings should ensure that staff provide their results (positive, negative or void) to NHS Test and Trace. Results should also be shared with their workplace to support local contact tracing.

Staff who decline to participate in this testing programme should follow the usual national guidelines on self-isolation and anyone should get tested if they show symptoms.

Are the tests provided free of charge?

Yes. There is no charge for the tests.

How often should I take the test?

It is recommended that the tests are taken twice weekly i.e. two tests 3-4 days apart per week. It is also recommended that tests are taken before you attend the setting.

Do I have to take the test on the same days each week?

Yes, it is advised that tests should be taken on a fixed schedule e.g. the same days and times each week.

If I've previously had coronavirus or have received the coronavirus vaccine, should I still undertake twice weekly testing?

Yes, given the current prevalence of the virus and the pressing need to reduce transmission, all those offered twice weekly testing are encouraged to take it up whether they have previously had coronavirus or have received the vaccine.

Please ensure the LFD test is not taken whilst you are within period of self-isolation following a positive coronavirus test result.

How will the testing work?

Staff within education and childcare settings will be supplied with at home Lateral Flow Device (LFD) test kits which they will be able to use twice weekly 3-4 days apart before coming into work, ideally in the morning. The LFDs supplied do not require laboratory processing and can provide a quick result in about 30 minutes.

Testing is not mandatory for individuals and they will not need to produce a negative test result, or provide proof of having taken a test, to return to work in person. However, testing is strongly encouraged.

LFD tests have been widely and successfully used to detect asymptomatic COVID-19 cases. The speed and convenience of the tests supports the detection of the virus in asymptomatic individuals, who would not otherwise have got tested. LFD tests are approved by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) and are crucial in the fight against the virus.

The asymptomatic testing programme does not replace current testing policy for those with symptoms. Anyone with symptoms, whether they are involved in the asymptomatic testing programme or not, will still be expected to obtain a PCR test and follow NHS Test, Trace, Protect Guidance, self-isolating until they have received their results.

Settings and staff must continue with all current protective measures – asymptomatic testing does not replace these controls or make these less important in controlling the virus.

How accurate is a lateral flow device test?

Lateral Flow Device (LFD) tests have been widely and successfully used to detect COVID-19 in asymptomatic individuals. The speed and convenience of LFD tests supports detection of the virus in asymptomatic individuals who would not otherwise be tested.

Extensive clinical evaluation has been carried out on the lateral flow tests. Evaluations from Public Health England and the University of Oxford show these tests are accurate and sensitive enough to be used in the community for screening and surveillance purposes.

LFD tests identify individuals with the early stage of infectiousness and with the highest infectivity. These individuals tend to spread the virus to many people and so identifying by LFD remains important.

It is important to remember that these tests are an additional layer of health protection measure in addition to face coverings, social distancing etc. People who have had a negative LFD test must still comply with the relevant protective measures for their workplace.

How do I undertake the test?

Training is not required, the tests can be self-administered and come with clear instructions, but in summary:

- wash and dry your hands thoroughly
- remove the test (being careful not to touch the soft part)
- open your mouth wide. Use the swab to rub the back of your throat firmly four times on each side
- remove the swab without touching teeth, tongue or gums

This document was downloaded from GOV.WALES and may not be the latest version.

Go to <https://gov.wales/routine-testing-education-and-childcare-staff-html> for the latest version.

Get [information on copyright](#).

- gently place it in your nostrils (2.5 cm inside) and rub the swab along the lining of your nostril 4-5 times
- remove (being careful the swab doesn't touch anything)
- place it in the tube for testing for 30 minutes and await the result (a coloured line will appear if positive)
- wash hands thoroughly after disposing of the test

Each time an individual takes a test they need to record the result via the online results portal (which can be accessed via a smartphone) or by the phone number provided in the test kit. This needs to be done each time a test is taken regardless of whether the result is negative or positive.

What do I do if the result is positive?

If the result is positive you will need to record this via the online results portal. All results must be recorded. You will also have to notify your setting (childcare settings will also need to notify CIW) and then confirm the positive result by arranging a PCR test at a testing centre as soon as possible. You can arrange a test by booking online or by calling 119.

In the meantime, you must follow the self-isolation guidance and self-isolate for 10 days, as will all members of your household. This should start immediately from the LFD positive test result.

If the PCR test result is negative you can end your self-isolation period and resume twice weekly testing.

What do I do if the result is negative?

If the test result is negative, you will need to record this via the online results portal but no further action is required and you can continue your day as usual. All results must be recorded.

How do I dispose of the test?

Regardless of the test result, once your test is complete, put all of the used test kit contents in the waste bag provided. Seal and put the bag in your general household waste.

Can I use the test on a member of my family?

No, the tests are for those working in education, childcare and play settings only. This means that tests cannot be used for family members.

All tests will have to be signed for and use will be monitored.

How do I receive the tests?

For larger settings who are able to store tests on site, the tests can be ordered through an operational portal and will be delivered to the setting 10-14 days later. Settings will need to store the tests and ensure they re-order when stocks are low.

Where space is an issue, for example for childcare settings based at community facilities or childminders, work is underway locally to determine clear supply chains. This could mean collecting the tests you need from a local hub. It is not currently possible to send tests out through the general postal system, and deliveries are only available in large quantities.

Settings will need to create and update a test kit log and test register to record the distribution of test kits.

Why are children/learners not included in this testing approach?

The public health data suggests that there is a risk that the in-setting

transmission is posed by adults/staff. As such children and learners are currently not included in the testing approach.

This document was downloaded from GOV.WALES and may not be the latest version.

Go to <https://gov.wales/routine-testing-education-and-childcare-staff-html> for the latest version.

Get [information on copyright](#).

About this document

This document is a copy of the web page [Routine testing for education and childcare staff](#) downloaded.

Go to <https://gov.wales/routine-testing-education-and-childcare-staff-html> for the latest version.

This document may not be fully accessible, for more information refer to our [accessibility statement](#).

Get [information on copyright](#).

This document was downloaded from GOV.WALES and may not be the latest version.

Go to <https://gov.wales/routine-testing-education-and-childcare-staff-html> for the latest version.

Get [information on copyright](#).