



Guidance

Rapid asymptomatic coronavirus (COVID-19) testing in early years settings

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Asymptomatic testing is available to early years staff.

Nurseries

Nursery staff are eligible for regular asymptomatic testing as part of education testing programme and are receiving lateral flow device (LFD) kits for twice weekly testing at home. Those in [schools-based nurseries and maintained nursery schools](#) have been receiving testing since 18 January 2021 alongside primary schools.

From 22 March 2021, the asymptomatic testing programme in education expanded to all staff in private, voluntary and independent (PVI) nurseries.

Childminders and wraparound childcare providers

Childminders and staff in wraparound childcare providers can access asymptomatic twice-weekly testing from 22 March by:

- going to a [lateral flow test site](#)
- collecting [home test kits from a collection site](#)
- [ordering a home test kit online](#)

Participation

Regular, rapid testing is already in place for millions of people across the NHS, care homes and schools. Those in households, childcare or support bubbles of anyone who works in an occupation related to a childcare provider, school, nursery or college can also access twice weekly testing. The government has also confirmed [twice-weekly testing using rapid lateral flow tests](#) is available to everyone in England. Tests are available through the channels above or collecting from their local pharmacy ('Pharmacy Collect' service).

We encourage everyone to participate in testing. About 1 in 3 people with coronavirus do not have symptoms but can still pass it on to others. Regular testing of people without symptoms is important to help stop the virus spreading and protect your loved ones. Regular testing for those without symptoms is a critical tool to safeguard the population and stop the spread of the virus as sections of society are opened up.

Carrying out the tests

Nursery staff are being supplied with lateral flow device (LFD) test kits to self-swab. Staff are asked to take their test kits home and carry out the test twice a week.

The tests should be:

- taken before going to the workplace to minimise the risk of introducing infection
- evenly spaced through the week

Staff returning to work after a period of leave should take an LFD test before coming into work.

Part time workers should still broadly space their 2 tests through the week.

Reporting results

The LFD test will give a result in around 30 minutes. Staff must [report their result \(whether positive, negative or void\) to NHS Test and Trace](#) as soon as the test is completed either online or by telephone as per the instructions in the home test kit. Staff should also share their result with their nursery (whether positive, negative or void) to help with contact tracing.

Testing is not mandatory for staff and staff do not need to provide proof of a negative test result to attend nursery in person, although participation in testing is strongly encouraged.

Staff with positive results

Staff with a positive LFD test result will need to:

- self-isolate in line with the [stay-at-home guidance](#)
- arrange a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test to confirm the result

Some staff, parents and carers may be eligible for a one-off Test and Trace support payment of £500. This is payable in one lump sum from your local authority.

To be eligible for a Test and Trace support payment, you should meet all of the following criteria:

- be on a low income
- be unable to work from home
- be at risk of losing income as a result of self-isolating
- live in England

For further information please refer to the [Test and Trace Support Payment scheme](#) guidance.

Short term illness or self-isolation should not be a consideration in deciding whether to furlough an employee. If, however, employers want to furlough employees for business reasons and they are currently off sick, they are eligible to do so, as with other employees. In these cases, the employee should no longer receive sick pay and would be classified as a furloughed employee. HMRC has published guidance on [which employees you can put on furlough using the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme](#).

Negative results

Staff with a negative LFD test result can continue to attend school or nursery and support the implementation of the routine system of controls already in place in educational settings. Anyone with symptoms (even if they recently had a negative LFD test result), should still follow [government guidance to self-isolate](#) immediately.

Role of the asymptomatic testing programme

The testing programme is an important addition to supporting leaders to maintain the continuity of education through the pandemic. It remains imperative that the [system of controls](#) continues to be rigorously applied to enable the safest possible environment. Even if you test negative, you should continue to follow national and local rules and guidelines including:

- regular handwashing
- social distancing
- wearing a face covering where required

The asymptomatic testing programme does not replace the current testing policy for those with symptoms. Anyone with symptoms (even if they recently had a negative LFD test result), should still follow [government guidance to self-isolate](#) immediately.

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