

# All households with children of school aged to get rapid COVID-19 tests per person per week

- Regular, rapid testing will be offered to households, childcare and support bubbles of primary, secondary and college age children and young people
- In line with the government's roadmap, the latest expansion of asymptomatic testing will support the national priority to get children back to school
- Rapid test kits will be available to collect from more than 500 locations, or through workplace testing and local community testing services

Testing will continue to be a vital part of our response to Covid19, supporting the roadmap set out by the Prime Minister earlier this week. As we cautiously ease restrictions in England, starting with the return of schools and moving towards more social mixing at the end of March, we need to be sure that each Covid case is found as quickly and as easily as possible. Although cases are declining, everyone needs to play their part to keep the virus under control while keeping children and young people in school.

As laid out in the roadmap, secondary school and college students will now be tested twice a week, receiving three initial tests at school or college before transitioning to twice weekly home testing. Primary school children will not be regularly asymptotically tested due to low levels of transmission between younger aged children but will continue to need to come forward for tests if they have symptoms.

In addition to this, the government has confirmed twice-weekly testing using rapid lateral flow tests will be given for free to all families and households with primary, secondary school and college aged children and young people, including childcare and support bubbles, to help find more Covid-19 cases and break chains of transmission. Twice-weekly testing will also be offered to adults working in the wider school community, including bus drivers and after school club leaders.

With about a third of individuals with coronavirus showing no symptoms and potentially spreading it without knowing, targeted, regular testing will mean more positive cases within households are found and prevented from entering schools and colleges, helping to keep educational settings safe.

Rapid testing detects cases quickly – in under 30 minutes – meaning positive cases can isolate immediately. This can be the difference between children being able to stay in school, or a class being sent home due to an outbreak. It could also be the difference between a workplace having to close for a period, or being able to stay open and running.

Health and Social Care Secretary Matt Hancock said:

Regular testing of households and childcare support bubbles of primary and secondary school children is another tool we are making available to help keep schools safe. We know that one in three people with Covid-19 don't have any symptoms, so targeted, regular testing will mean more positive cases are kept out of schools and colleges.

As we continue to roll out the vaccine, testing offers us a way forward. Sustained and repeated testing for people without symptoms has a critical role to play as sections of society are reopened by driving down transmission rates.

By everyone playing their part and getting tested regularly, vital public services, workplaces and educational settings can stay open and running, and we can move closer to a more normal way of life.

Education Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

We are getting all children back in the classroom from 8 March, because it will bring huge benefits to their education and wellbeing, and is a hugely important step in helping them recover from the impact of the pandemic.

Testing family members will provide yet another layer of reassurance to parents and education staff that schools are as safe as possible, building on the massive increase in testing for secondary school and college students, and strengthened requirements around face coverings in areas where social distancing cannot be maintained.

Professor Yvonne Doyle, Medical Director at Public Health England, said:

These rapid tests help uncover hidden cases of the virus and break chains of transmission, stopping outbreaks before they occur.

Combined with other protective measures, they are a vital tool to help us lower infection rates and ensure that they stay low.

I would encourage all eligible households to take up the offer of twice weekly rapid testing – it's quick and painless and could help save lives.

All households with primary and secondary school and college age children, and childcare and support bubbles, will be encouraged to start regular twice-weekly testing as schools return. Tests will be available for adults in these households to collect on 1 March. As with student testing, this is encouraged but not mandatory. A secondary PCR test will be required for positive lateral flow tests which are taken at home, either through at home PCR testing or at a local PCR testing site.

Getting a rapid test is quick, convenient and free. The expanded regular testing offer for people without symptoms will be delivered through:

- testing in-person via workplace testing
- at local authority test sites
- through a new ordering service, which once launched on 1 March will allow people to order lateral flow tests online for collection at a local PCR test site during specific test collection time windows

The expansion of asymptomatic testing is already well underway for those who need to leave home for work. Workplace testing has already scaled up, with both private and public sector employers signed up to provide rapid testing at asymptomatic testing sites, along with a self-test option for those that cannot access a workplace testing site. This includes the UK's largest employer – the NHS, adult social care, education staff and a wide range of other sectors.

All local authorities in England have now enrolled in the community testing programme. As a partnership between national and local government, community testing offers asymptomatic testing for local public services, small businesses, self-employed people and communities that have been disproportionately affected by the virus.

Testing in education settings is now well established, with 600,000 tests done at universities since last year and more than three million rapid COVID-19 tests conducted in schools and colleges in England since 4 January, including tests for those students who have already returned and regular testing for all staff.

Rapid, regular testing for new groups is one of a range of new measures designed to minimise the spread of COVID-19 and support the successful return of more learners to face-to-face education and childcare settings. Testing is an additional tool, working in conjunction with other protective measures that are in place in schools to help protect staff and students including social distancing, handwashing and face covering. Schools and colleges will not be expected to provide the test kits to families or administer the family testing process.

Anyone with symptoms of Covid-19 should book a test [online](#) or by calling 119.