

Frequently Asked Questions

Asymptomatic Testing in Scottish Primary, Secondary and Special Schools, and ELC Providers (v1.0)

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1. Overview of the Schools/ELC Asymptomatic Testing Programme

1.1 What are the aims and objectives of the Schools/ELC Asymptomatic Testing Programme? Why are you doing this?

The Scottish Government is working with local authorities, schools and other key partners to put in place an testing programme for people without the symptoms of coronavirus as part of the package of coronavirus risk reduction mitigations in education settings.

Its aim is to contribute to the reduction of coronavirus-related risks in schools and, in so doing, to enhance the confidence of our school communities.

It will do this by helping to identify asymptomatic individuals in school environments at the earliest possible opportunity and asking them and their close contacts to self-isolate, thus minimising the likelihood of them passing on the virus.

1.2 Does this replace existing testing arrangements?

The asymptomatic testing programme does not replace the current testing policy for those with symptoms. School staff and pupils who experience symptoms of coronavirus must self-isolate immediately and arrange a PCR test at www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test. People with symptoms must not rely on a negative LFD result to continue to attend school.

1.3 Which individuals and institutions can access asymptomatic testing under this programme?

The programme is initially available to:

- all primary, secondary and special school staff in local authority, independent and grant-aided schools;
- all ELC and childcare staff based in local authority, independent and grant-aided schools; and
- all senior phase pupils in local authority, independent and grant-aided secondary and special schools.

School staff include teachers, classroom-based support staff, administrative staff, facilities management staff (cleaners, janitors, etc.), school transport staff and other school-based staff who are critical to the effective delivery of school education.

If staff are working from home, and not attending school, they should not participate. This is because the goal of the programme is to minimise the risks of COVID-19 in the school environment.

1.4 Which ELC staff are included as part of the testing rollout?

All ELC and school-aged childcare staff working in settings attached to schools are included in the initial testing rollout.

1.5 What about ELC staff in settings other than schools?

With the exception of childminders, staff in all other ELC and childcare settings can currently access asymptomatic PCR testing through their employer if they have concerns about having been exposed to the virus.

We are working through the logistics of making the same testing available to standalone local authority ELC settings, and ELC settings and other day care of children services in the PVI sector.

1.6 What about childminders?

Consideration is being given to the clinical basis and practical options for expanding access to on-demand asymptomatic testing for childminders.

1.7 Has any consideration been given to senior phase pupils with additional support needs?

Some senior phase pupils may require additional support to undertake self-testing, or may be unable to do so without adult support and supervision. For some senior phase pupils with additional support needs it may not be appropriate for testing to take place under any circumstances.

Pupils with additional support needs and those who work most closely with them will be best placed to decide whether testing will be appropriate. Consideration should be given to the individual needs of the pupil to ensure the appropriate level of support is provided.

In line with existing guidance, schools should ensure regular and clear communication with parents and carers, including sharing steps that are being taken to mitigate risk such as testing.

[Risk assessments](#) play a key part in considering the individual needs of young people with additional support needs, and may be used to consider whether the self-test programme will be appropriate for individual senior phase pupils (taking into account the potential for support from parents or guardians).

Risk assessments, which may be integrated into a Child's Plan, should already exist for senior phase pupils with complex additional support needs (see: supplementary guidance for children with complex needs: [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): supporting children and young people with complex additional support needs - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)). These risk assessments should be reviewed and updated as appropriate, to reflect current circumstances. Where they are not in place or they have not been updated they must be undertaken or reviewed swiftly in accordance with [Coronavirus: reducing risks in schools guidance](#) and local risk assessment guidance.

1.8 What are the key features of the programme?

Drawing on learning from pilots in pathfinder schools, we have worked with the UK Department for Health and Social Care and key stakeholders to agree a model of asymptomatic testing that is intended to be both effective and deliverable, minimising burdens on school staff while reducing risks in schools as part of a wider package of mitigations. The model involves the following:

- Schools will be provided with packs of Lateral Flow Device (LFD) test kits for staff and senior phase pupils.
- Schools will then be asked to distribute these test kits to consenting staff and senior phase pupils. Schools will be asked to keep a log of which kits have been distributed to which individuals.
- Staff and pupils will take test kits home and, twice weekly, following clear instructions for use, perform the tests on themselves or with the support of a parent or guardian. They will then register both positive or negative results on a web-based portal, with the results shared with NHS Test and Protect. The processes that should be followed by individuals depending on a positive or negative result are clearly explained in the supporting guidance.
- Schools will be able to reorder test kits when they need to do so. The precise processes for doing so are still under development and will be communicated to schools as soon as they have been confirmed.

1.9 Where can schools access all of the guidance for the programme?

The guidance for the programme can be accessed via [Objective Connect](#). Key guidance includes:

- A Standard Operating Procedure, which schools should follow in order to ensure adherence to clinical requirements.
- A How to Guide, which includes information on the roles and responsibilities that nominated school staff will need to undertake in support of the programme. These have been kept as light touch as possible.
- A standard contract that sets out the legal relationship between individual schools and the supplier of the test kits, the UK Department for Health and Social Care. Schools should read this carefully, but they do not need to sign or return it. DHSC will consider participation in the scheme to imply agreement.

To access Objective Connect, schools will need to register for an account. Once schools have access, the documents can be downloaded and shared if required. However, they should check back regularly for updated documents.

All schools will have been sent an invitation to join the testing programme workspace in Objective Connect. These email addresses have been taken from the school contact details spreadsheet on the Scottish Government website: [School contact details - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#). **The email address on this list is what will be used for schools, so they should check the inbox of the listed email address for an invitation.**

When schools click on the link in the invitation email, it will prompt them to create an account. This requires a first and last name (e.g. name of head teacher), but the school name can be used if preferred. It will also ask for a password to be created – please keep this safe.

Once schools have gained access to the Objective Connect, it will show them “My Workspaces”. There will be a button that says “Accept Invitation”, [please click this.](#)

Schools will now have access to the “LFD Testing Expansion Schools” workspace which contains all of the resources required to run a programme of at-home asymptomatic testing.

Schools can view any of the documents available in the Objective Connect workspace and can download these and share with colleagues.

If schools wish to change the email address used for their organisation, or if they are having trouble accessing Objective Connect, they should email schoolscovidtesting@gov.scot.

Turning off email notifications (*important – to avoid email overload*):

- a. Click on your name in the top-right corner to show a drop down menu.
- b. Click on Settings
- c. On this page you will see "Profile Settings", click the pencil icon.
- d. Then untick "All Notifications", and click the green tick button to save.

1.10 Is participation compulsory?

We expect all local authorities and schools will wish to participate and offer at home test kits to staff and senior phase pupils.

The programme is voluntary – nobody should be required to undergo testing without consent, and nobody should be excluded from school if they do not wish to test.

However, we are asking that school staff and senior phase pupils be strongly encouraged to participate, in order to contribute to the wellbeing of their school communities.

Staff who decline to participate should follow the usual national guidelines on self-isolation. Everyone should get tested if they show symptoms.

1.11 Can staff and senior phase students who have opted out join the testing programme at any point?

Yes. The school/ELC setting should share the privacy notice and relevant materials with that member of staff when they choose to participate.

1.12 Do participants have to pay?

No. Tests are free of charge and will be provided to participants by the school.

1.13 How do staff and senior phase pupils use the test kits?

The Lateral Flow Devices (LFDs) supplied do not require laboratory processing and can provide a quick result in around 30 minutes. They involve self-swabbing and following a simple process to achieve a test result.

Comprehensive guidance on conducting self-testing is contained in the ‘Instructions for Use’ leaflet which will be provided with the test kit. There is also a useful video and an additional infographic, to show you how to administer the test. These and other guidance documents can be accessed by school teams via the document sharing portal ([Objective Connect](#)).

Once the test has been conducted, staff and senior phase pupils must log the test result – whether positive, negative or void – online at www.gov.uk/report-covid19-result.

1.14 When will testing start?

Schools will begin to receive deliveries of test kits during the **week commencing 8th February**. They will be asked to distribute test kits as soon as possible to staff and senior phase pupils who attend schools when it is permitted to do so.

Staff and senior phase pupils will be encouraged to begin testing as soon as they are able to do so. If they receive their test kits in the week prior to a return then they may begin testing during that week.

1.15 What if staff do not receive their test kits prior to a return/what if test kits are delayed?

If staff have not received their test kits, but still wish to test prior to returning, they can request a PCR test through the local authority employer portal, in line with current arrangements.

1.16 Are the tests safe and accurate?

LFD tests have been widely and successfully used to detect coronavirus in asymptomatic individuals. No test is perfect, but the speed and convenience of LFD tests supports detection of the virus in asymptomatic individuals who would not otherwise be tested. They are clinically approved and are crucial in the fight against the virus. The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) has authorised the use of these at-home tests for the purposes of detecting the virus in asymptomatic people.

LFD tests are very accurate, which means that only a very small proportion of people who do not have coronavirus will receive a positive result (false positive). The tests are better at picking up true positive cases when a person has a higher viral load and is more contagious. There is a risk of returning a false negative result when viral loads are low (e.g. in the early stages of infection). This is why Public Health Scotland recommend two LFD tests 3 to 4 days apart, or regular testing, to enhance detection by picking up any cases which were not detected during the first test and to catch any new infections.

If you test positive using an LFD, it is likely that you are infectious at that moment, whereas people testing positive on a 'Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR)' test could be in the less infectious early or late stages of disease. This means that by using the LFD, we can identify people with a high viral load who are the most likely to spread the virus further.

1.17 How is the use of test kits monitored?

Schools are required to keep a log of all of the test kits distributed to staff. This is a regulatory requirement, and helps ensure that test kits are being distributed to eligible individuals and that any consistent problems (e.g. individuals requesting more kits than expected due to successive void results) can be picked up.

The UK Department of Health and Social Care may from time to time request that schools share this log (or extracts from it) to assist in monitoring and responding to issues with test kits.

1.18 How should results be reported?

All individuals doing home testing must register the test kits at www.gov.uk/report-covid19-result, and report the results whether positive, negative or void/invalid. Alternatively, you can report by telephone by calling 0300 303 2713 in Scotland.

1.19 What happens if staff or senior phase pupils test positive?

If a participant receives a positive result on their Lateral Flow Device at home, they must report the result online at www.gov.uk/report-covid19-result (or by calling 0300 303 2713 in Scotland), self-isolate and book a confirmatory PCR test. This can be done at www.gov.uk/get-coronaviruis-test. We advise visiting a community or drive through test site as this is the quickest way to get tested, or participants can order a home test kit.

It is important that test subjects begin self-isolation immediately after they receive the positive result from the LFD test, and do not wait until the result of their PCR test.

1.20 What happens if the test result is “void”?

This means the test has not run correctly. Participants should report the result online at www.gov.uk/report-covid19-result. They need to take another test. They should use a new test kit, and not reuse anything from the first kit.

1.21 What if a staff member or pupil has been in close contact with someone who tests positive under the programme?

If a pupil or member of staff has tested positive, they will have to self-isolate as per government guidelines. The pupil or member of staff should also inform the school of their absence, and are strongly encouraged to report a positive case to their school to support contact tracing activities.

Test and Protect and/or the school will contact staff members and pupils who were in close contact with a positive case to inform them that they need to self-isolate.

1.22 Does testing replace the need for other mitigations (e.g. distancing, wearing of masks etc.)?

No. A negative LFD result must not be taken as leave to relax or ignore physical distancing or other measures intended to reduce transmission – LFD testing is an additional intervention that contributes to reducing risk.

Staff and senior phase pupils should ensure they observe physical distancing and wear face coverings when attending schools to collect test kits.

1.23 What happens if someone has a problem with the tests?

Any incidents that could potentially impact the quality or safety of testing should be reported to the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA).

Incidents occurring in a home setting (for example: something damaged, or missing or difficult to use in the kit, unable to log result) should be reported to **0300 303 2713**.

If there is a clinical incident which led to, or has the potential for, harm (e.g. swab breaks in the mouth, bleeding, allergic reaction on using the kit etc.) this should be reported on <https://coronavirusyellowcard.mhra.gov.uk>.

This is not for seeking immediate medical care. Medical care should be sought through the usual route of contacting 111 or 999.

1.24 What will happen to the personal data of people involved in the programme?

All participants will be provided with a privacy notice prior to beginning testing. This will explain what will happen to the individual's data.

1.25 Does the Scottish Government's programme meet regulatory requirements?

Yes. The test-to-find approach using at-home LFDs is fully in line with the [authorisation](#) issued by the MHRA to the Department of Health and Social Care to allow the use of the COVID-19 Self-Test kit to detect infection in asymptomatic individuals.

1.26 How does this programme relate to/differ from the UK Government's testing programme?

The UK Government is using the same model of at-home LFD testing for staff in primary schools and some nurseries. This programme is being extended to Scotland.

The UK Government is currently using a different model in its secondary schools. This involves secondary schools setting up in-school asymptomatic testing sites using LFDs. We have opted not to do this for our scale-up plans, as the at-home testing option is our preferred option for Scottish secondary schools. However, the in-school LFD testing option may be a valuable approach in some circumstances in schools in Scotland.

The Scottish Government has also taken a decision that senior phase pupils will be able to access regular testing using the at-home LFD tests.

The Scottish Government is also providing confirmatory PCR testing for all schools/ELC providers that are using at home LFD tests. This is currently only required for primary schools/nurseries in England, as secondary schools are doing in-school LFD testing.

More generally, Scotland is participating in the UK-wide testing programme and the test kits provided to schools under this programme will be drawn from our allocation under that UK-wide programme. We are working with the Department of Health and Social Care and its distributors to ensure that test kits can be delivered to schools.

1.27 Why did the UK Government pause part of its schools testing programme? Does Scotland have the same element as part of its programme?

The UK Government has taken a decision to pause one part of its school testing programme, which involved daily serial testing using LFD tests for secondary school pupils who are close contacts of a positive case. Further information can be found at [Pausing daily contact testing and self-isolation of pupils and teachers: your questions answered - Education in the media \(blog.gov.uk\)](#).

There is no change to the rest of the UK Government's programme of regular testing in schools.

The Scottish Government did not opt to include the daily serial testing element in either its pilot models or in its scale-up model.

1.28 How does this programme relate to the testing pilots that are currently ongoing in Scottish schools?

The Scottish Government is working with local authorities and schools on a number of testing pilots in schools. These are piloting two models of testing.

The first was a model of in-school testing of staff and senior pupils using LFD test kits, the second a model of at-home PCR testing of school staff.

The model of testing being rolled out to all schools combines elements of these pilots. However, the recent regulatory approval for at-home testing using LFDs allows us to address some of the weaknesses already identified in early learning from the pilots.

For example, the pilots indicated that the at-home PCR model was generally less burdensome for schools to run than the in-school LFD model. However, the courier and lab processing elements of the at-home PCR model were identified as potential challenges. Issues with couriers were likely, especially if the model were scaled up to more than 2,500 schools in Scotland.

The at-home LFD model we have adopted therefore combines the positive elements of both of these models.

Pilot schools will switch to the at-home LFD model when they have finished their pilots.

2. Operational and implementation issues

2.1 Deliveries and supplies/storage

2.1.1 Will schools/ELC settings have to opt in to receive the test kit supplies?

The UK Government Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC), who will be supplying the test kits, has set out a legal agreement with terms and conditions that schools will agree to by participating. No specific steps need to be taken to sign-up to receive the first delivery of test kits. Schools and ELC settings can expect to receive their initial test kit supplies from w/c 8 February. Further information will be provided about replenishment of these supplies. Testing should commence as soon as possible thereafter.

2.1.2 What specific storage arrangements are required for the test kits?

The temperature for storing LFD test kits is between 2°C and 30°C. This is because the LFD devices and reagents must be used between 15°C and 30°C during use so must not be stored outside. If they are stored somewhere colder than 15°C, then move them to a room temperature area for around 30 minutes before use.

The storage room must be able to be secured to prevent unauthorised access to the test kits (e.g. a staff room). It must allow enough space for social distancing when handling or distributing test kits, etc.

2.1.3 What happens if we are not able to receive the delivery for some reason?

The delivery partner will reattempt delivery in the next possible timeslot. However, we would be grateful if every effort could be made to ensure someone is onsite at the time of delivery advised.

2.1.4 What do I do if my school/nursery has not received their kit?

If you have not received your first delivery by Friday 12 February, please contact the DHSC central incident management helpline on control@dhsc.gov.uk or tel: 0207 972 1000 - option 3.

2.1.5 Our boxes have arrived! Does each blue box only contain 1 test kit? Or do we open them to reveal more than one in each little blue box?

Each individual box in the initial delivery has seven tests. Please give one box of seven per staff member/senior phase pupil plus the new Instructions For Use.

Please note that supplies for senior phase pupils will switch to boxes of three for future deliveries.

2.1.6 How do we reorder supplies?

The initial test kit packs of seven are expected to last up to three and a half weeks based on staff/senior phase pupils testing twice a week. We will communicate further on how to reorder in due course.

2.2 Getting set up and distributing test kits (including workforce requirements)

2.2.1 How should headteachers/nursery leaders brief their staff/senior phase pupils about the programme?

Leadership teams may want to take staff and pupils through the materials supplied on the document sharing portal ([Objective Connect](#)) and testing Instructions for Use (v 1.3.2), including the 'How to Guide' and the 'how to self test' video, as a group to give consistent messaging. The format of any such briefing should comply with national guidelines on social distancing.

2.2.2 What workforce requirements are there?

Schools and ELC settings should appoint a Covid Coordinator and a Registration Assistant to help deliver the testing programme in their settings. These can be the same person if appropriate.

2.2.3 What are the duties of those undertaking the staff testing roles?

Prior to commencing their roles, staff must read the guidance and familiarise themselves with their roles.

The **Covid Coordinator** responsibilities cover the overall management of the coronavirus self-testing programme at the school or nursery, including:

- engagement and communication with staff, senior phase pupils and parents
- ensuring staff are using the right instructions and that they sign for the test kits using the 'Test Kit Log'
- reporting incidents and carrying out risk management
- storing and reporting any required data
- ensuring privacy information is provided to staff and pupils at the outset of any testing programme.
- reordering tests when required (advice on how to do this will follow)

The **Registration Assistant** duties cover:

- distributing the correct number of test kits and managing the distribution schedule
- working with the Covid Coordinator/Programme manager to manage the stock of kits
- sending reminders to staff to report their results online
- responding to staff questions about testing

2.2.4 How much time are staff expected to spend on these roles?

The size of the school and its workforce will dictate how long the activities set out under the Registration Assistant and Covid Coordinator roles take. It is advisable that staff are given allocated time slots for test-kit pick up, to maintain social distancing and to avoid queues and crowding. We expect that the initial set-up, including registration of staff and distribution of tests, may take up to 2 days.

2.2.5 How much training will staff members get?

All of the information needed to allow an individual to participate in testing is included in the instructions for them. Schools and ELC settings and their staff/senior pupils can find detailed information on how to self-swab and use the at home LFD tests in

the following, which can be accessed via the document sharing portal ([Objective Connect](#)):

- 'Instructions for Use' handbook (v 1.3.2)
- 'How To' guide
- YouTube video series covering a 'step to step guide to Covid-19 self testing' ([Step by step guide to COVID-19 self-testing - YouTube](#))

2.2.6 What record keeping does the school or nursery need to do?

Schools/nurseries should keep a test kit log, where they record which individual has taken which kits home. This is required in the unlikely event of an incident requiring investigation or batch recall. This log will also help record that staff have received the new instructions for use. A template is provided on the document sharing platform ([Objective Connect](#)).

The UK Department of Health and Social Care may from time to time request that you share this log (or extracts from it) to assist in monitoring and responding to issues with test kits.

2.2.7 How long should primary schools/nurseries keep the Covid-19 test log?

As outlined in the privacy notice and Standard Operating Procedure, the school should retain its test kit log for a period of 7 years from the date of the last entries made by the school.

The UK Department of Health and Social Care may from time to time request that you share this log (or extracts from it) to assist in monitoring and responding to issues with test kits.

2.2.8 Will my school/ELC setting have any costs reimbursed?

Schools and ELC settings will be supplied with at-home Lateral Flow Device (LFD) test kits which they will be able to use before coming into work. The home testing offer is intended to make the process as simple to manage as possible, minimising the demands placed on school and nursery workforces to deliver their staff testing programme.

The responsibilities of the programme (Covid Coordinator and Registration Assistant) are intended to be integrated within existing staff or volunteer structures. We do not expect additional staffing costs to be incurred, as the administrative requirements for schools are relatively light.

However, if any staffing costs do arise from testing activities, local authorities may wish to make use of their allocations from the recently announced £45m of funding from the Scottish Government, which includes provision for staff to support any wider rollout of testing initiatives to promote safety in school.

2.2.9 How should schools/ELC settings distribute the supply of test kits?

We advise that staff and senior phase pupils are given allocated time slots for collecting their test kits to maintain social distancing and to avoid queues and crowding.

For staff and senior phase pupils who are not currently attending school, schools may wish to invite them to attend specifically for the purposes of collecting test kits, to allow individuals to begin testing as early as possible in advance of a return to school.

Staff who distribute kits and those collecting kits should maintain social distancing and wear appropriate face coverings in line with national guidance.

2.2.10 What about risk assessments?

Each school / ELC provider participating in self-testing should undertake a risk assessment prior to starting testing and continue to maintain this on their risk register. This should cover risks associated with testing, non-reporting, poor uptake, communication etc.

3. Testing and self-isolation

3.1 Why should staff/pupils get tested if they have no symptoms?

Lateral flow tests are designed to detect the level of virus in individuals who do not experience and show any symptoms, but who could still be infectious and pass the virus to others. By taking a test, staff and senior phase pupils will help to stop the spread of the virus, protect other people, and save lives.

3.2 What are the benefits of participation?

By detecting more asymptomatic cases, schools can avoid unnecessary staff shortages through staff or senior phase pupils unwittingly infecting others. Staff and pupils can contribute to the overall wellbeing of their school community by participating.

3.3 How often should staff and senior phase pupils take a test?

Staff/senior phase pupils should take the test twice weekly at home 3-4 days apart. If participants work part-time or have irregular attendance, they should still take a test twice weekly. Peripatetic staff should choose one school/nursery from where they will collect their home test kits.

3.4 Do staff working from home need to take a test if they never attend school/nursery in person?

No: the test kits are only for those working on school / nursery premises that might unknowingly infect others. The goal of the programme is to minimise the risks of coronavirus in the school/ELC environment.

3.5 When should participants do the testing?

Participants should test twice weekly 3-4 days apart before coming into work/school, ideally in the morning. If participants cannot take the test in the morning, they should take it as soon as possible before coming in. Participants can test on the weekend.

Avoid eating or drinking half an hour before the test. A small amount of water is acceptable. There is unlikely to be an adverse impact of brushing teeth prior to testing but it might be prudent to wait a while before testing.

3.6 What impact does this testing have on protective measures in schools?

A negative LFD result must not be read as a means to relax or ignore other virus prevention measures intended to reduce transmission – LFD is an additional tool that contributes to reducing risk.

All existing protective measures set out in guidance (e.g. physical distancing between adults, handwashing, face coverings, environmental hygiene, etc.) remain important and the need for these is not lessened.

3.7 Will the existing testing service remain open?

The Government's normal testing service for symptomatic individuals will continue. This is the foundation of our testing strategy. It is the most effective way to know if staff are positive and need to self-isolate. If staff have symptoms, they must self-

isolate and continue to book a test via the NHS Coronavirus (COVID-19) service (see <https://www.nhsinform.scot/> or www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test) or by calling 0300 303 2713 in Scotland.

People with symptoms must not rely on a negative LFD result to continue to attend school.

3.8 Can staff/pupils' families get tested too?

No, this asymptomatic LFD testing is aimed at staff and senior phase pupils only. The tests will be handed to staff and senior phase pupils for personal use and should not be used for anyone else. Family members of staff taking part are not eligible.

If family members experience coronavirus symptoms, they must follow standard Government guidance, including self-isolating immediately and booking a test through the NHS Coronavirus (COVID-19) service or by calling 0300 303 2713 in Scotland.

3.9 If a staff member receives regular (twice weekly) testing in another setting, e.g. NHS, should they still take part in testing in school?

If a staff member is participating in asymptomatic testing in a different setting, they do not need to participate in asymptomatic testing simultaneously in the school/nursery setting.

3.10 Should someone who has been vaccinated take a LFD test?

Yes, we do not yet know whether vaccines prevent individuals transmitting the virus.

3.11 If a staff member or senior phase pupil has had a positive PCR test followed by a negative LFD test taken at home, can they end self-isolation?

No, individuals must continue to self-isolate. The at-home LFD tests are not approved to allow release from self-isolation. If an individual has had a positive PCR test they should self-isolate and not take an LFD test for their period of isolation.

3.12 What happens if staff or senior phase pupils have a positive LFD test at home but the follow up PCR is then negative?

If you have a negative PCR test following a positive LFD test, you and your household can stop isolating as per the NHS stay-at-home guidance.

3.13 What should happen to contacts of staff/pupils who have a positive LFD test and a positive confirmatory PCR test?

Schools should follow their existing processes in identifying close contacts of positive cases that would need to self-isolate.

3.14 From when should self-isolation of an asymptomatic case commence?

If staff or senior phase pupils are asymptomatic, the self-isolation should start as soon as the LFD test taken at home shows a positive result, in line with the NHS stay at home guidance. They should arrange a confirmatory PCR test as soon as possible.

3.15 Should I still take part in the asymptomatic testing programme if I have recently tested positive for coronavirus?

No. If individuals have recently (within 90 days) tested positive for coronavirus, they should not take part in the regular testing. They must complete their period of self-isolation before returning to school or nursery.

3.16 How should staff/senior phase pupils dispose of their kit?

Once their test is complete, staff/pupils should put all of the used test contents in the small waste bag provided. They should seal the bag and put the bag in their bin at home – it is classified as general household waste.

4. Information about LFD tests

4.1 Are the swabs latex free?

The manufacturer has confirmed that Innova swabs are latex free.

4.2 Does the LFD test contain any harmful substances and are there any precautions for dealing with spillages?

Extraction solution which comes with the LFD test kit contains the following components: Na_2HPO_4 (disodium hydrogen phosphate), NaH_2PO_4 (sodium phosphate monobasic), NaCl (Sodium Chloride). These components do not have any hazard labels associated with them, and the manufacturer states that there are no hazards anticipated if individuals follow the instructions for use.

Any spillages should be wiped with a paper towel and if the solution included the throat and nose sample, the area should be appropriately disinfected using household disinfectant.

4.3 Do the LFD tests contain animal products or have they been tested on animals?

All of the antibodies are necessarily generated from animal cells. While we do not test any of these products on animals, nor are animals harmed in the development process, the antibodies used for the test reaction are derived using an animal cell in the laboratory. The T line for a positive test is derived by reaction between the sample as it flows to the membrane (thin paper like material inside the device) which is coated with these antibodies. It is therefore highly unlikely for there to be any direct contact between the person being tested and the animal material itself.

However, we want to make sure that the people undertaking the test make an informed choice about this.

4.4 Are the LFD tests vegan?

The monoclonal antibody technology present in our lateral flow devices are generated from animal cells. During development, at no time have any component parts been tested on animals.

4.5 Are the LFD tests halal?

No animal products have been used in the production of the swabs. The swab is the only material with which the individual will come into direct contact. The individual using the test will not come into direct contact with any materials made from animal products.

The thin paper like material inside the LFD is coated with antibodies from animal cells. No direct contact will be made between the person and this material. The monoclonal antibody technology present in our lateral flow devices are generated from animal cells. This is in common with other tests of this kind, including commercially available pregnancy tests.

4.6 Is the LFD test safe for those that are pregnant?

Yes, the tests are safe to use by those who are pregnant.