

COVID Asymptomatic Testing – Frequently Asked Questions

What are the objectives of the Government’s asymptomatic testing strategy in education settings?

As many as one in three people who contract the virus show no symptoms (they are asymptomatic), so could be spreading the disease unknowingly. Asymptomatic testing helps to identify positive cases more quickly and break the chains of transmission. Those who test positive will self-isolate, helping to reduce transmission of the virus. The asymptomatic testing programme does not replace the Government’s current testing policy for those with symptoms. If you have symptoms, you should continue to book a test via <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/> or by calling 119.

What are the Government’s testing plans for schools/ colleges in the Spring term?

Secondary schools should reinstate a full on-site Asymptomatic Testing Site (ATS) and offer one test on-site per student, with student continuing regular testing at home. To facilitate this, Orchard Mead Academy has been provided with refreshed guidance, test kits, and PPE so we can have an on-site ATS ready for the start of the Spring term. This will help to identify cases and stop transmission to support the return to education.

At Orchard Mead Academy, we are testing during the first week of term. Testing will take place during the normal school day, with students collect from their lesson and taken to the test site.

Following the initial on-site tests, we ask students to continue twice weekly testing at home (subject to the latest public health advice).

If you require additional lateral flow device tests, students should speak to the Head of Year. Alternatively, these are available to order for free on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) or at your local pharmacy.

Does my child have to participate in testing?

No. Testing is voluntary, and consent must be received before a student is tested. We do, however, strongly encourage all students to participate in testing to help us stop the spread of coronavirus.

Will my child be allowed to return to school if they do not participate in testing?

Yes. All students have the right to education and will be allowed to return to school if they choose not to participate in testing.

Why are you using antigen lateral flow tests instead of PCR tests?

Antigen LFD tests produce results much quicker than PCR tests. With antigen lateral flow tests, a result is available within 30 minutes or less, rather than 1-2 days as is the case with PCR tests. The rapid turnaround has a significant impact on transmission reduction.

Are antigen LFD tests accurate?

Antigen lateral flow tests have been widely and successfully used to detect COVID-19 in asymptomatic individuals and are approved by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA). Using antigen LFD tests is crucial in the fight against the virus.

Extensive clinical evaluation has been carried out on the antigen 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.

Antigen LFD tests identify individuals who are likely to be infectious. These individuals tend to spread the virus to many people and so identifying by LFD remains important.

Why is on-site ATS testing now being done via Orient Gene Lateral Flow Device (LFD) tests?

These tests were introduced because they are easier to use and quicker to process.

What is the alternative to Orient Gene if a student cannot nasal swab?

We have some Innova test kits for use by students who are unable to nasal swab.

Who is the Orient Gene test not suitable for?

According to guidance, the Orient Gene test is not suitable for people:

- Who are prone to nosebleeds.
- Who have had facial or head injury surgery in the last 6 months.
- Who are visually impaired.

If any of these conditions apply to you, please let the school know and we will use an Innova lateral flow test instead.

What happens if an antigen LFD test result is positive?

All positive results from rapid tests, whether conducted at home or at school will then need to be confirmed with a PCR test within two days of the positive lateral flow test. Following a positive LFD test, a confirmatory PCR test should be booked immediately either online or by calling 119. Whilst awaiting the PCR result, the student should continue to self-isolate. If the PCR test is negative, it overrides the LFD test and the student can return to school or college. Proof of results need to emailed to: results@orchard-tmet.uk.

All existing protective measures set out in the guidance remain important and the need for these is not lessened. A negative PCR or LFD test result should not be read as a means to relax or ignore social distancing or other virus prevention measures intended to reduce transmission – rapid testing is an additional tool that contributes to reducing risk.

Should I still take part in the asymptomatic testing programme if I have recently tested positive for COVID-19?

If you have tested positive by PCR for COVID-19, you will probably have developed some immunity to the disease. However, it cannot be guaranteed that everyone will develop immunity, or how long it will last. It is possible for PCR tests to remain positive for some time after COVID-19 infection.

Anyone who has previously received a positive COVID-19 PCR test result **should not** be re-tested within 90 days of that test, unless they develop any new symptoms of COVID-19.

If, however, you do have an antigen LFD test within 90 days of a previous positive COVID-19 PCR test and the result of this test is positive, you and your household should self-isolate and follow the steps in this guidance again.

If it is more than 90 days since you tested positive by PCR for COVID-19, and you have new symptoms of COVID-19, or a positive antigen LFD or PCR test, follow the steps in this guidance again.

Will I get the results of the antigen lateral flow test?

Yes. Results will be sent by NHS test and trace using the mobile number you provide on the consent form.

Will I have to register my child's test?

If the lateral flow device test is done at the in-school test site (Sports Hall) you will not need to register the test – this will be done for you by our testing team.

Are volunteers conducting the test trained?

Yes. All our volunteers and school testing staff are fully trained in supervising lateral flow device tests.

Are volunteers conducting the test DBS checked?

Yes. All our volunteers have been DBS checked and Orchard Mead Academy staff are also onsite providing extra support.

Who do I speak to in school if I have any problems?

Please contact Miss Rachel Hill (0116 2413371, ext. 819; rhill@orchard-tmet.uk).

Contact tracing and isolation

The current guidance on contact tracing and isolation remains in place. Any suspected or confirmed close contacts of the Omicron variant will be asked to isolate for 10 days.

What about vaccinations?

All eligible staff and students aged 12 and over are encouraged to take up the offer of the vaccine, including boosters.

Vaccines are our best defence against COVID-19. They help protect young people and adults, and benefit those around them. Vaccination makes people less likely to catch the virus and less likely to pass it on.

To book a vaccine, please visit: [Book or manage a coronavirus \(COVID-19\) vaccination - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk).