



Testing in Secondary Schools and Colleges

Frequently Asked Questions

Aims of Asymptomatic Testing in Secondary Schools and Colleges

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 in England and Wales, or 0300 303 2713 in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Which schools and colleges are in scope?

The following types of secondary schools and colleges are in scope:

- local authority maintained secondary schools and academies (including special schools, pupil referral units and alternative provision)
- all through schools deemed secondary
- independent schools (including independent special schools and independent alternative provision)
- hospital schools
- FE colleges (general further education colleges, sixth form colleges, special post-16 institutions). This also includes 19+ students attending college.
- Independent Training Providers and Adult Community Learning Providers, (home testing)

What is the Government's plan for testing in secondary schools and colleges over the summer?

Rapid testing will continue to support education by helping to identify people who are infectious but do not have any coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms.

Most of this will be self-testing at home, although all schools and colleges have been



asked to maintain a small asymptomatic testing site (ATS) where it is not possible to test at home. During the summer holiday period, we recognise that most schools will be closed. Education settings should only offer regular testing to staff or students who are attending settings over this period.

There is no need for primary age pupils (i.e. those in Year 6 and below) to test over the summer period if they are transitioning from primary to secondary school. They should not test even if they are participating in summer schools or open days, prior to starting at their new school in the autumn.

What about schools who operate holiday activities?

Regular rapid testing will pause in schools and colleges over the summer except for those that remain open, such as extra-curricular activities, tuition, Holiday Activities and Food programme. In these cases, we ask that those attending continue to test regularly, and should continue to access testing through their usual route and report their results twice weekly as outlined.

However, testing is still widely available, and kits can be collected either from your local pharmacy or ordered online [here](#).

Do students attending open days in FE have access to tests?

Students should be encouraged to test before attending open days in a FE setting. New students, and any persons accompanying them, should be encouraged to access testing by ordering on gov.uk or collecting from a pharmacy. If the individual is already an existing student, they should continue to use the test kits through their usual route. Testing remains voluntary and proof of test will not be requested.

What are the Government's testing plans for schools/ colleges in the autumn term?

Secondary schools and colleges should reinstate a full on-site Asymptomatic Testing Site (ATS) and offer **two** tests on-site per student (3-5 days apart) before continuing regular testing at home. To facilitate this, we will provide all schools and colleges with refreshed guidance, test kits, and PPE so that schools can be ready to stand up on-site ATS from the start of the autumn term if needed. Test kits deliveries commenced from Tuesday 29 June and there is no need for schools and colleges to make separate orders for this. Information on delivery schedules and refreshed guidance is now available on the [school/college document sharing platform](#).

This will help to identify cases and stop transmission to support the return to education – particularly as most students will not be testing for a long period over the summer and will need to re-establish the habit of regular twice weekly testing. It will



also give new pupils and students the opportunity to get used to swabbing in a supervised environment before moving to twice weekly testing at home.

As with the return to school/colleges in March 2021, we expect this will require a phased return in the first week of term to manage the numbers passing through the test site at any one time. Schools and colleges will therefore have the option to stagger the return to school and to starting on-site testing up to three days before the start of term. Schools and colleges have the flexibility to consider how best to deliver testing on a phased basis, depending on their circumstances and local arrangements.

A pupil/student's first test at an on-site (ATS) should be as soon as possible after they arrive at school or college, and they will be allowed to resume face to face learning if they test negative after that first test. If they test positive, they will need to go home and self-isolate in line with government guidance. Their second test should be 3 to 5 days later. If a school/college decides to test up to three days before the start of term, pupils/students should be sent straight home once they have completed their test.

Following the two initial on-site tests, and once schools have received deliveries of test at home kits, we expect to ask students to continue twice weekly testing at home (subject to the latest public health advice).

Schools and colleges should retain minimal testing capacity on site so they can offer testing to pupils and students who are unable to test themselves at home.

Staff across all education settings should undertake twice weekly home tests whenever they are on site until the end of September, when this will be reviewed in line with public health advice.

Further guidance can be found on the document sharing platform we have shared with schools and FE providers. If you do not think you have access, then contact the DfE helpline.

Special Needs and Alternative Provision settings

We recognise specialist settings will have additional considerations to consider when delivering asymptomatic testing and additional guidance has been published and circulated. We recognise that self-swabbing may cause significant concerns for some children and young people with SEND. Testing is voluntary and no child or young person will be tested unless informed consent has been given by the appropriate person.

Which staff are in scope for testing?

Schools and colleges should offer testing to all staff who are school and college based, including teaching and non-teaching staff members, such as support staff, clinical practitioners and therapists. Non-permanent members of staff should also be



offered testing, such as trainee teachers on placement in school, volunteers and supply workforce. Some staff, for example those employed through the NHS in specialist settings, may have separate arrangements for regular testing.

Is participation in testing compulsory?

No. Testing is voluntary, but staff, pupils and students are strongly encouraged to participate as testing regularly helps to reduce the spread in school and college settings through asymptomatic transmission.

Can students and pupils swab themselves?

Yes. In an Asymptomatic Testing Site all secondary age students can swab themselves if they are able to under appropriate supervision (this includes 11-year-olds in year 7). Adult supervision is not a requirement for 18 and above.

When testing at home, pupils/students aged 18 and over should self-test and report the result, with assistance if needed. Pupils/students aged 12-17 should self-test and report with adult supervision. The adult may conduct the test if necessary.

When testing at home, children aged 11 (who attend a secondary school), should be tested by an adult.

Are close contacts of positive cases still required to self-isolate?

From 19 July, education and childcare settings will not routinely be asked to undertake contact tracing for children and young people. Close contacts will still be identified via NHS Test and Trace. Settings may be contacted in exceptional cases to help with identifying close contacts, as currently happens in managing other infectious diseases.

Students who test positive will be subject to the normal test and trace process, which will identify close contacts. This will be limited to very close contacts. From the 16 August, unless they test positive, children and those who are fully vaccinated will not be required to self-isolate if they are identified as a close contact. Self-isolation continues for those who have tested positive for Covid.

Are settings still responsible for contact tracing?

From 19 July, schools and colleges will no longer be asked to trace close contacts. Close contacts will still be identified via NHS Test and Trace but schools will not have additional responsibilities in contact tracing.

When will restrictions in schools and colleges be lifted?

On 6 July we announced and published information on the relaxation of measures in education and childcare settings from 19 July.



Schools and colleges are no longer being asked to keep children in consistent groups ('bubbles'). This means that bubbles will not need to be used for any summer provision (for example, summer schools).

From 19 July, schools and colleges will no longer be asked to trace close contacts. Close contacts will still be identified via NHS Test and Trace but schools will not have additional responsibilities in contact tracing.

On-site Asymptomatic Testing Sites (ATS)

What are you doing to minimise disruption caused by ATS in the autumn?

We are committed to minimising disruption to schools and colleges wherever possible. That's why education settings can start onsite testing up to 3 days before the start of term and can stagger the return of pupils during the first week of term to accommodate this. We have also reduced the recommendation for onsite testing from three to two tests. As before, we are providing financial support to enable schools/colleges to stand up a workforce to deliver on site testing. Schools/colleges have flexibility to deliver testing in a way that works in their local circumstances.

What additional help or support is there for schools and colleges to stand up ATS testing on return?

We know that setting up on site testing is a significant ask for schools and colleges. To make this as easy as possible, full guidance is available on the schools and colleges document sharing platform. We will also support schools and colleges with the workforce costs associated with setting up on-site testing – the workforce planning tool on the document sharing platform provides more information.

If schools/colleges do not have enough existing staff to deliver on-site testing, the Voluntary and Community Sector Emergencies Partnership (VCSEP) may be able to help. VCSEP is a coalition of over 230 organisations across England and may be able to offer additional workforce support to your school/college. Please give as much notice as possible to ensure the best chance of securing this resource in time for the autumn.

There is a small administrative charge for the deployment of volunteers, which is to be agreed between the charity network and the setting. Schools/colleges will be able to use their ATS workforce funding allocation to cover these associated costs.

Where specialist settings do not have the capacity to deliver assisted swabbing, further support may be available from Medacs Healthcare.



Information and guidance on how to access this help is available on the secondary schools and colleges document sharing platform. If you have any queries or require further advice about ATS testing in your school or college, please contact the helpline 0800 046 8687.

Can I start testing pupils and students before the start of the autumn term?

Schools/colleges can start testing students/pupils no earlier than three days before the start of term, or stagger the return of pupils during the first week of term if they would like to do so. This is voluntary and at the discretion of each school and college.

Who will be running the asymptomatic testing site in schools and colleges?

In most cases staff, pupils and students will self-swab to provide a test sample. There are a number of related roles in the testing process, which are set out in the [School and Colleges How to Guide](#).

Schools and colleges will be responsible for establishing their testing workforce, which could be made up of existing staff, agency staff or volunteers. Schools and colleges are responsible for ensuring that volunteers and other test support staff have passed the NHS Test and Trace training modules and assessments before testing begins.

It is also the responsibility of the school or college to ensure all staff and volunteers on their site meet the appropriate safeguarding requirements, including DBS for specific roles, and comply with data protection legislation on the privacy of individuals' personal information, in accordance with the existing DfE guidance.

What further workforce support may be available to my school or college?

As well as accessing workforce funding, there are other options available to schools and colleges to support their testing workforce:

Commercial routes for hiring external, temporary staff can be accessed via a range of existing frameworks. More detail on each of these frameworks is available in the ['How Do I Buy Guide'](#), published on the schools' resources Google Drive.

Volunteers can offer additional capacity on rapid testing sites. School and college leaders may recruit volunteers that are already available to them, such as parent volunteers or school governors. The Department has provided a full range of voluntary support offers, which are available for schools and colleges to access. Should you require more information about these voluntary support offers, please contact the DfE helpline.

Additional capacity for assisted swabbing is available in exceptional circumstances. This capacity is to support children and young people with health needs, which



prevent them from self-swabbing, and in instances where school/college staff are not available to deliver assisted swabbing (for example, due to staff absences). This support can be accessed via the DfE Helpline.

Will volunteers require a DBS check?

Schools and colleges must comply with their legal duties regarding pre-appointment checks when utilising agency staff, contractors, and volunteers to support testing. Usually, if you are involved in the testing procedure, or if you are at any time with children unsupervised, then you will require a DBS check. If you are volunteering but not assisting with swabbing and you will not be unsupervised with children/ young people at any time, then you will not need a DBS check.

It is essential that agency staff, contractors and volunteers are appropriately supported and given appropriate roles in accordance with the existing DfE guidance.

What funding is available for schools and colleges?

The Department will provide funding for schools, colleges and specialist settings, for reasonable workforce costs incurred in on-site testing.

We appreciate running an ATS when students return does require a workforce. We will continue to make funding available to support schools and colleges with the costs associated with on-site testing during the initial return of students. To help you plan for on-site ATS testing on return in the autumn, we have published an updated workforce planning tool on the [secondary schools and colleges document sharing platform](#). There are no major changes to the tool, however it has been updated to reflect that secondary schools and colleges are now expected to conduct two tests on return rather than three.

If there is a change in policy and schools and colleges are asked to stand down their ATS, will they be compensated?

Yes. If this happens, we will ensure that schools and colleges are able to recover costs that have been incurred prior to the policy change, where the costs cannot be either refunded or re-used in subsequent testing and were committed to in line with the original policy.

Claims will be considered in the following circumstances:

- recruitment of temporary staff at a level above that required for the period but where the costs had been committed to and could not be cancelled
- costs incurred for premises, but which are no longer required and cannot be cancelled or refunded



- temporary hire of additional equipment such as seating or tables for the period which will be unused but cannot be returned or refunded
- cancellation costs where temporary staff, premises or equipment were cancelled

Costs cannot be claimed for commitments/agreements entered into, after any announcement of a policy change.

Schools and colleges will need to identify which of the above categories the claim relates to, and supply documentary evidence of the costs being claimed such as invoices or contracts.

Is funding available for on-site ATS that special schools maintain for their pupils for whom at home testing is not suitable?

We have made funding available to support all secondary schools, special schools and colleges deliver on-going on-site testing for a small proportion of their pupils, where test at home is not appropriate. We anticipate that this will require a maximum of 1 to 3 testing bays for most schools and colleges, depending on their size. In Special Schools, Alternative Provision and Special Post-16 institutions we anticipate that on-site testing may be more appropriate for a greater proportion of children and young people; these settings should carefully consider the specific needs of their pupils, to establish the right level of on-site testing they continue to deliver. The revised conditions of the grant is now available [here](#). This includes coverage of payments for the spring term, as well as Daily Contact Testing (DCT) phase one payments.

Will insurance companies who work with schools and colleges, including the Risk Protection Arrangement (RPA) scheme, cover all the activities related to the asymptomatic testing programme?

The RPA will indemnify members if a claim is brought by a third party (including pupils) or employees. It will cover death, injury, or damage to third-party property, due to the school or college undertaking the asymptomatic tests.

It would be advisable that schools and colleges that are not members of the RPA, should contact their individual commercial insurance provider, for definitive clarification on cover.

RPA cover is subject to the usual RPA Membership Rules and its terms, conditions, and limitations. It will include defence costs and any damages/compensation that the Member is legally liable to pay to the claimant. The RPA will not provide an indemnity to any other party (e.g., the machine manufacturer) if the other party incurs a legal liability.

It is a requirement that risk assessments are undertaken, recorded, and adhered to. In the event of loss or damage to any equipment that is owned by or the Member's



responsibility (e.g., through a lease or hire agreement) used in the provision of the testing, the RPA will provide an indemnity to the Member for the cost of repair or replacement. The cover is subject to the usual RPA Membership Rules (including all limitations, conditions, and exclusions).

How much time does a school or college require to plan the test area, set up the area, and undertake staff training?

Secondary schools and colleges can find detailed information on the number of staff and estimated time and space needed for each asymptomatic testing site, and training needs in the following [Schools Colleges How To Guide](#).

What happens if a parent is unable to collect a child who has tested positive?

In non-residential schools, if a pupil displays coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, or has a positive test, while at their school they should avoid using public transport and, wherever possible, be collected by a member of their family or household.

In exceptional circumstances, if parents or carers cannot arrange to have their child collected, if age-appropriate and safe to do so the child should walk, cycle or scoot home following a positive test result. If this is not possible, alternative arrangements may need to be organised by the school. The local authority may be able to help source a suitable vehicle which would provide appropriate protection for the driver, who must be made aware that the individual has tested positive or is displaying symptoms.

If a pupil is awaiting collection:

- they should be moved, if possible, to a room where they can be isolated behind a closed door, depending on the age and needs of the pupil, with appropriate adult supervision if required.
- a window should be opened for fresh air ventilation if it is safe to do so.
- if it is not possible to isolate them, move them to an area which is at least 2 metres away from other people.
- if they need to go to the bathroom while waiting to be collected, they should use a separate bathroom if possible - the bathroom must be cleaned and disinfected using standard cleaning products before being used by anyone else.
- personal protective equipment (PPE) must be worn by staff caring for the pupil while they await collection if a distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained (such as for a very young child or a child with complex needs) - more information on PPE use can be found in the [safe working in education, childcare and children's social care settings guidance](#)



What should I do if not all students/pupils are expected to be on-site in the first week, such as part time learners, and two tests at an on-site ATS is logistically challenging for these learners?

Schools and colleges have flexibility to deliver testing in a way that works in their local circumstances as long as it is in line with the clinical Standard Operating Protocol (SOP – link [here](#)) and guidance provided. If certain pupils/students (e.g. part-time students) are not on-site in the first week of term and are not able to participate in the two on-site tests, you should encourage these pupils/students to start twice weekly home testing as soon as possible on their return. It is very important that, when testing at home, test results are reported online to NHS Test & Trace whether positive, negative or void. They should also report positive, negative and void results to the setting.

What if a school or college is concerned about the amount of space on-site ATS will take up?

We know every setting is different. Schools and colleges may start testing up to 3 days before the start of term and can stagger the return of pupils during the first week of term, depending on their circumstances. A school/college could also consider developing a testing rota to allocate testing days by year groups if space is limited. You may also wish to consider flexible testing models whereby test sites are set up and dismantled or re-purposed to accommodate other things happening in the space between morning and afternoon sessions.

What is the ‘bulk upload’ service?

To support onsite testing, schools and colleges have the option to register up to 100 test kits at a time, using a service known as ‘bulk upload’.

As part of the guidance relating to summer and autumn testing, which was published on 28 June, we advised that from 12 August, this service was being upgraded to enable you to also record the test results associated with those test kits, rather than having to upload results individually. This will reduce the time required to process results.

How do I use the ‘bulk upload’ service to register ATS test kits and record results?

To register and upload test results for multiple test kits using this service, schools and colleges need to **download** and fill in a new [Bulk Upload spreadsheet v 1.3](#) with information about the test kit and the test subject. Any old versions of the bulk upload spreadsheet you have been using will no longer work and will be rejected by the system if you try to upload them.

It is essential that you [download this spreadsheet](#) from the document sharing platform prior to completing. It is **not possible to copy and paste** data from an old spreadsheet into the new one, as doing so will corrupt data in the new spreadsheet and it will then be unusable to upload results.

The spreadsheet contains detailed instructions on the first sheet for how to fill it in;



including what to do before you start, how to fill the spreadsheet in, what to do if you encounter errors when adding data to certain fields and what you can expect to happen after you upload the spreadsheet. After filling in the spreadsheet it can be uploaded to the bulk upload service, by accessing this link [Register test kits for your organisation -GOV.UK](#).

Detailed instructions on how to use the bulk upload service can be found in section 5 of the [digital handbook](#).

If you encounter any problems with the spreadsheet, please check you have downloaded and are using version 1.3, which can be found [here](#). If you continue to encounter any problems, please contact 119.

Home testing

Why can't Orient Gene tests be used at home?

Currently, the new Orient Gene LFD kits are only intended for use by trained healthcare professionals or other trained operators, which means they are only approved by the MHRA for use at on-site ATS. They are not approved for home testing yet.

When should staff, pupils and students do the testing? Mornings vs evening? Is weekend testing allowed?

Staff, pupils and students should test twice weekly before coming into school/college, ideally in the morning. If they cannot take the test in the morning, they should take it as soon as possible before coming into school/college.

How will staff, pupils and students know what do to with the home test kits?

Detailed information on how to self-swab and process the tests is in the Instructions for Use and there is an [NHS video demonstrating how to carry out a test](#) . In addition, a detailed [How to Guide for home testing](#), is available.

The home testing instructions have been translated into multiple languages online through this link here: [COVID-19 self-test help - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#).

What supervision do different age groups need for testing at home, after they have their first two tests on site (ATS)?

Pupils/students aged 18 and over should self-test and report the result, with assistance if needed. Pupils/students aged 12-17 should self-test and report with adult supervision. The adult may conduct the test if necessary. When testing at home, children aged 11 (who attend a secondary school), should be tested by an adult.



How will test results be recorded when home testing?

When testing at home, schools will not automatically find out if staff, pupils or students have taken a test. Staff, pupils or students (or the parent) should report the test result via the NHS Online reporting system for both negative, void and positive test results. They should also report positive, negative and void results to the school/college. If the result is positive, the individual should isolate, and NHS test and trace will work with them (or their parent/legal guardian) to identify any close contacts. Following a positive antigen LFD test, a confirmatory polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test should be booked immediately either online or by calling 119.

Those with a negative antigen LFD test result can continue to attend school/college and use protective measures.

What record keeping does the school or college need to do?

Schools and colleges are required to 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. This must be separate from the results register for data protection reasons. A template is provided on the document sharing platform.

Schools and colleges are also encouraged to keep a record of staff, pupil and student tests results. This will help in the exceptional event that a setting is asked to assist with contact tracing. A template record is provided on the document sharing platform.

The individual is also required to record and share their result (whether positive, negative or void) with NHS Test and Trace.

Our pupils can only test on-site. What should we do?

Settings should work with pupils/students and their families to agree the most appropriate way of them accessing testing. Even if it is appropriate for the majority of pupils/students to test at home we recommend schools/colleges with an on-site ATS retain some small capacity so that they can offer testing to pupils/students unable or unwilling to test at home. After the initial tests on return, you should be able to scale back the number of bays you require to reflect the number of students you believe are unable to test themselves at home. In some settings the asymptomatic test site may need to maintain more capacity if a large number of pupils/students cannot take advantage of the home testing offer. We have built in funding so that, should they choose to, SEND settings can maintain a full scale on-site ATS at their school.

Can my family get tested too?



Families cannot get tests via the schools and colleges. The schools and colleges asymptomatic antigen LFD testing is for staff, pupils and students in schools/colleges. The tests will be handed to staff, pupils and students for personal use and should not be used for anyone else.

However, families can now access twice-weekly test kits through other routes. Households with early years, primary school, secondary school and college age children, including childcare and support bubbles, can test themselves twice every week at home. Households, childcare and support bubbles of early years, primary, secondary and college staff can also be tested. Twice-weekly testing will also be offered to adults working in the wider school community, including bus drivers and after school club leaders. The twice-weekly test kits can be accessed:

- via employers if they offer testing to employees
- at a local test site
- by collecting a home test kit from a test site
- by ordering a home test kit online

This **guidance** provides information on who can be tested and how you can get a test.

If family members experience COVID19 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 119 (England and Wales).

Do students and staff who are fully vaccinated need to continue testing?

Yes. Current public health guidance is that regular testing should continue in settings that remain open, even for those who have been fully vaccinated. The need for regular asymptomatic testing in education settings will be reviewed in September.

Antigen Lateral Flow Devices (LFDs)

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 that might occur in the time gap.

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 than the previous Innova LFD kits. Further information about the Orient Gene test kit can be found on the [document sharing platform](#).

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

Sites should retain some Innova ATS test kits for use by students, pupils or staff members who are unable to nasal swab and are undergoing testing on-site. In this case, the Innova ATS test kit should be used for throat swabbing only and it is important you ensure the appropriate testing instructions for the kit you are using are followed.

Please contact the helpdesk on 0800 046 8687 if you have pupils or students who require Innova test kits for use on-site (as they cannot have a nasal swab and cannot be tested at home) and you are running low on stock.

I have received Orient Gene ATS kits and the instructions for use say 'for clinical use only', what should I do?

A small number of Orient Gene ATS testing kits for secondary schools and colleges have been issued with the incorrect instructions inside the box.

The instructions are incorrect because the swabbing methodology for Orient Gene has since been updated to nasal-only swabs by the manufacturer and are now suitable for use by non-medical professionals, including individuals aged 12 or above (and 11-year-olds in year 7). The incorrect instructions implied this was not the case.

This means that the test kits you have received can be used in schools and colleges for ATS testing and the published guidance on the [document sharing platform](#) reflects this.

I have received a different type of at home test kit, labelled <Orient Gene> or <Acon- Flowflex> . Should I throw the old ones away?



No. You should use your Innova test kits first and then start using the new Orient Gene / Acon-Flowflex ones. You should only place an order for more test kits when your current stock starts to run low.

Why have I received a different type of self-test kit; the <Orient Gene> or <Acon-Flowflex> home test kit?

These tests were introduced because they are easier to use and quicker to process than the previous Innova LFD kits. To increase resilience across the supply chain and ensure an effective response to the pandemic, NHS Test and Trace (T&T) regularly review new LFD products entering the market. Orient Gene and Acon- Flowflex are just as effective as Innova at detecting asymptomatic cases of Covid 19 and will start to be supplied for at-home testing, to enable asymptomatic testing in these settings continues.

Are <Orient Gene> or <Acon- Flowflex> LFD tests better/ more reliable than the Innova ones?

All LFDs in use by NHS Test and Trace have undergone the same rigorous clinical evaluation by PHE Porton Down and Oxford University. The Orient Gene and Acon-Flowflex tests have been proven to be equally effective at detecting individuals who are thought to be the most infectious. All tests are equally suitable for their intended use and have MHRA approval or are CE marked so have regulatory approval for self-test. While there are some small differences between the devices, they have all been clinically evaluated and selected for use based on performance.

How can I tell the difference between Orient Gene ATS test kits and Orient Gene self-test kits (for at-home testing)?

Orient Gene ATS test kits come in packs of 20, whereas Orient Gene self-test kits come in packs of 7, for at-home testing. Orient Gene ATS test kits (in packs of 20) should only be used for onsite testing and packs of 7 Orient Gene test kits should only be supplied for at-home testing. Each staff member or student should be supplied with a pack of 7 test kits for at-home testing, to enable 3.5 weeks of testing.




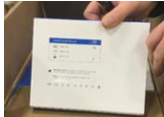


Are the new kits much different from the old ones that I'm used to?

The Orient Gene and Acon- Flowflex test kits are just as effective at detecting asymptomatic cases of COVID 19 as the Innova test kits. The kits come in boxes of 7 so one box will still enable you to test for 3.5 weeks before you need additional test kits. The way you process the test is slightly different, as Orient Gene and Acon-Flowflex tests only require a nasal swab (not nasal and throat like Innova) Further information about how to process an orient gene or Acon- Flowflex test can be found



on the document sharing platform.

The main changes between the types of test kit are in the table below:

Differences	Innova	Orient Gene	Acon-Flowflex
Device			
Test Kit package	White and teal 	Green and white 	Blue and white 
Preparing the extraction solution – number of drops	6 drops	Approx. 10 drops	No drops required?
Process swab – swab rotations and processing Further information on the swabbing process can be found in step 6 of this guide	Follow the rotation process for approx. 10 seconds, then squeeze the swab head by squeezing the extraction tube several times.	Follow the rotation process (shown in step 6) at least 6 times and then leave the swab in the extraction tube for 1 minute, then squeeze the swab head by squeezing the extraction tube several times.	Follow the rotation process for approx. 30 seconds then rotate the swab 5 times while squeezing the side of the tube.
Loading solution into LFD	2 drops	4 drops	4 drops
Results analysis – result development timings	A positive result will appear and can be reported between 20-30 minutes. If a positive line does not appear, you must wait until the 30 minute mark to report it as negative or void.	Read the results at 15 minutes. Do not interpret the result after 20 minutes.	Wait 15 minutes until you read the result and read after 15-30 minutes. Do not read after 30 minutes.
Administering a swab sample	Nasal and throat	Double nasal	Double nasal

We are being supplied with nasal only test kits but have staff/students who are



unable can't nasal swab, what should they do?

In exceptional circumstances, where staff or students are unable to nasal swab, they should use an Innova LFD test kit to throat swab only. Sites should retain some packs of Innova test kits for staff or students who are unable to nasal swab. If you have run out of Innova test kits but have staff or students who are unable to tolerate a nasal swab please contact 119.

Does the fact you are introducing new tests now mean that you have decided to continue testing beyond the end of September?

We are introducing new test kits now to increase resilience in our supply chain so asymptomatic testing in education settings can continue for as long as is required. A decision will be made, based on the latest public health advice in September about whether testing will continue. This will be communicated to all educational settings nearer to the time.

Test kit supplies

How will test kits be provided?

Schools and colleges were initially automatically supplied with regular deliveries of home test kits, based on the number of staff and students at their setting, and have been able to place orders for further supplies of ATS test kits to meet the needs of their setting.

From 17 June, all secondary schools and colleges have been able to re-order both ATS test kits (for on-site use) and home test kits via an online ordering platform, which can be accessed at the [order coronavirus \(COVID-19\) test kits for your organisation](#) page on gov.uk.

How do we order tests in advance of autumn term?

You will not need to place an order for ATS test kits. An automatic replenishment of ATS test kits will be delivered to your setting to enable your pupils / students to test twice onsite on return in the autumn, before returning to at-home testing. These test kits will be delivered between 28 June and 23 July, depending on your school/college term time. Delivery schedules are now available on the document sharing platform.

You will however need to place a re-order for self-test kits. Before placing an order please check your current stock levels and only order the quantities that you require based on the testing requirements for your setting. Test kits should be ordered via the [online digital ordering platform](#).



To effectively manage the supply of test kits to secondary schools and colleges over the summer holiday period, we have put in place the following ordering windows.

- Orders for test kit supplies needed over the summer holiday period must be placed by 5pm on Tuesday 13 July, for delivery by Friday 23 July.
- Orders for test kit supplies for intended use in the autumn term should be placed between 14 and 31 July. Please do not order test kits for the autumn term before 14 July.

The re-ordering process for ACLPS and ITPs will continue to follow the usual ordering and delivery timescales throughout the summer period (i.e. orders placed by 5pm on a Tuesday will be delivered in the following week, orders placed after that time will be delivered in the subsequent week).

When will test kits be delivered to settings during the summer period?

Automatic deliveries of ATS test kits will be made to schools and colleges between 28 June and 23 July, depending on your term dates. Orders for self-test kits placed by 5pm on Tuesday 13 July will be delivered by Friday 23 July, to enable continuation of testing over the summer holiday period for settings that remain open. Orders for self-test kits placed between 14 July and 31 July will be delivered at the end of August or start of September, and will be scheduled to align with school/college term dates and summer school dates where possible to minimise disruption for the setting. A delivery schedule will be made available on the document sharing platform no later than 13 August.

How many test kits should I order for summer and autumn term testing?

You do not need to order any ATS test kits for undertaking a full ATS with your pupils/students upon return in the autumn. These will automatically be delivered before the end of the summer term.

If your setting will be open over the summer, you should ensure that you have enough self-test kits to enable any students and staff attending over the summer to continue twice-weekly testing. If you need to place an order for more self-test kits, this needs to be submitted by 5pm on 13 July, for delivery by Friday 23 July.

In preparation for the autumn term, you should consider your current stock levels and place an order for self-test kits to supply your staff, pupils and students from the start of the autumn term. These orders should be placed between 14 and 31 July.

Only order if you need additional test kits to enable your staff to continue testing in the first two weeks of autumn term and to enable your pupils/ students to start testing at home as soon as they have undertaken two tests on-site. Further test kit orders can be placed from 1st September when the usual reordering process resumes so orders placed before 5 pm on 7th September will be delivered the following week.

Please remember self-test kits are delivered in boxes of 7 therefore when you place an order for self-test kits for at home use, we will provide three and a half weeks' worth of testing for the number of staff and students that you have told us you need test kits for.



Will PPE be included in my order of ATS on-site testing kits?

A proportionate amount of PPE is included with all orders of ATS on site testing kits. For orders sent out to you automatically for testing of all pupils in the autumn return, these will be delivered separately to your delivery of ATS on-site testing kits. Where possible deliveries are being scheduled for the same day, but this may not be possible in all cases. This is only the case for the automatic deliveries you will be receiving for ATS on-site testing kits. If you place a separate order for more ATS on-site testing kits, we expect that the proportionate PPE will arrive with your order in a single delivery.

Why are we receiving ATS test kits and PPE in separate deliveries?

The reason why you are receiving these as separate deliveries is because they are being delivered by different delivery partners. Where possible deliveries are being scheduled for the same day, but this may not be possible in all cases. Please check the weekly delivery schedules to see when you can expect delivery. Separate deliveries of PPE and ATS on-site testing kits is only applicable for orders sent out to you automatically for testing of all pupils for the autumn return.

I have received a delivery of ATS kits week commencing 28 June 2021, but it did not include any PPE?

You will receive the delivery of your PPE before the end of your summer term. Please check the weekly delivery schedules to see when you can expect delivery. The reason why you are receiving these as separate deliveries is because they are being delivered by different delivery partners. Where possible deliveries have been scheduled for the same day but unfortunately this is not possible in all cases. **If you are an Independent school**, because we do not have confirmed term end and start dates, we expect to make a delivery of the outstanding PPE to you as early as possible on week commencing 30 Aug 2021.

How do schools/ colleges re-order test kit supplies?

You will need to access the online ordering platform and enter your school / college Unique Organisation Number (UON) to place a re-order for test kit supplies. You will be asked to submit the total number of staff and students that you require test kits for in your setting

When you place an order for self-test kits for at home use, we will provide three and a half weeks' worth of testing for the number of staff and students that you have told us you need test kits for.

When placing an order for ATS test kits, you should tell us how many staff and students you require ATS test kits for. You will receive an appropriate number of kits for you to maintain your current on-site testing for a three-and-a-half-week period. Details of how many test kits you can expect to receive will be provided in your delivery confirmation e-mail once your order has been processed. (Deliveries come in multiples of 960 test kits, so this would be the minimum you would receive and scaled up based on the size of your setting). If your scheduled delivery does not provide enough ATS test kits for your setting, then you can contact NHS Test and Trace on 119 to arrange for an additional delivery.



For SEND settings that are continuing to undertake on-site testing for all staff and students, we will provide ATS test kits for a three and a half week period.

Test kits can be ordered every 10 calendar days.

Detailed guidance on how to re-order test kits can be found in the [How to Guide for Re-ordering](#).

When placing an order, should we submit the total number of staff and students in our school/ college, or just the number we need to order test kits for?

Please submit the number of staff and students that you require test kits for within your setting. We will deliver three and a half weeks' worth of testing supplies based upon the number of staff and students that you told us you needed test kits for. Prior to placing an order, you should consider your current stock levels and only what you need.

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

For deliveries made by courier, the delivery partner will reattempt delivery in the next possible timeslot. Please allow up to 48 hours for a re-delivery attempt to be made. For deliveries made by Royal Mail, where no-one was available on site to receive the delivery, delivery partners will have posted a "Sorry we missed you" card, which allows you to rearrange your delivery.

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

Please report any missing test kits or deliveries to NHS Test and Trace by calling 119.

Before reporting a delivery as missing, please check the expected delivery date provided in the delivery confirmation e-mail and allow 48 hours for any re-delivery attempts to be made. Please also check whether the delivery has been received by anyone else in your school or college, such as someone in your catering department.

What do I do if the online re-ordering system won't let me order enough test kits?

If you are unable to order enough test kits for the staff and students in your setting, you should call 119 and they will arrange for you to increase the number of kits you can order. It may take up to 48 hours for the changes to be made.

What should I do if I don't know what my school/ college UON is?

You can find your Unique Organisation Number at the following [link](#).



In order to use the Unique Organisation Number (UON) lookup website, please enter your URN in the organisation ID field. If you are still experiencing issues retrieving your UON please call 119 for further assistance.

My school/college is resuming ATS testing for all staff and students because we are in a local area undertaking surge testing (an area with enhanced support for dealing a particular variant). How can I get test kit supplies?

If you need to order additional ATS testing kits to support resuming ATS testing for all staff and pupil at your school/college, you can do this by contacting NHS Test and Trace on 119.

Whilst you can still place an order for ATS test kits on the online ordering platform, this may take up to 10 days to arrive. The quickest way to receive a delivery of the test supplies you need, in the volume required, is to call 119.

Home Testing for Independent Training Providers and Adult Community Learning Providers

As an ITP/ACLP, how do I access home testing?

Home test kits for students and staff have been able to be ordered from this [link](#). Providers need to submit the numbers of staff and students that tests will be offered to. Providers also need to confirm that the correct delivery address is on the system before ordering. This needs to be an office with a staff member in attendance to receive kits. Please note that deliveries cannot be made to Post Office boxes.

Tests will be delivered based on these student/staff numbers and will provide three and a half weeks' worth of testing. Once test kits have arrived on site and a collection point has been set up, students and staff can be offered home test kits for regular twice weekly testing. Testing remains voluntary but strongly encouraged.

How do I place reorders?

Test kits can be reordered every 10 working days using this [link](#). The number of test kits that are delivered will be based on the number of staff/students that are submitted and will cover three and a half weeks of testing. ITPs and ACLPs will not be able to order more kits before 10 working days have passed since their previous order.

Do staff/students need to do a test when they pick test kits up from their provider site?

No. Students and staff should collect test kits from their provider site and begin testing twice weekly after they have collected their kits. Guidance on how to



administer home test kits is included in the kit instructions. Additional guidance is also available on the document sharing platform.

Do we have to set up the kind of testing facility that they have in schools/colleges?

No. An Asymptomatic Test Site (ATS) does not need to be set up. All tests should be completed at home by students and staff.

Is the twice a week testing based on a full-time student and should be adjust for part time students?

Students attending their provider onsite should conduct testing at home, twice every week, 3-4 days apart. There is no need for FE providers to test staff/students that already have access to rapid testing i.e. through their workplace.

What if a learner is only attending one session/day a week or a tutor is only tutoring one day a week? Do they still need to test twice a week?

Providers should use their discretion when determining which staff and students, including adults, are offered testing. However, if staff and students are attending onsite, they should conduct testing at home twice a week, 3-4 days apart. Additional FAQs for ITPs/ACLPs on asymptomatic testing can be found [here](#).

Consent

Do you need consent to process the personal data required for testing?

Secondary schools and colleges will need to satisfy themselves that they have a lawful basis for processing personal data, which need not necessarily be consent. Schools and colleges must provide staff, pupils and parents with a privacy notice explaining how data submitted when testing is processed. The Department has provided template privacy notices for school and colleges to adapt where appropriate.

Who requires parental consent?

Pupils under 16 years old require a parent/guardian to consent to their being tested on-site. The Department has provided template consent forms using the consent form, which can be found on the Document Sharing Platform. Pupils and students aged 16 or older may consent themselves using the consent form. Young people with SEND aged 16-25 years old do not need parent/guardian consent, provided that they are able to make the decision for themselves. However, the setting will need to decide whether the pupil can reasonably provide informed consent on their own behalf and may need to consider undertaking a Mental Capacity Assessment if appropriate. Looked after children may already have consent arrangements in place,



covered by their local authority. If not, the child's social worker may consent (or seek consent from those with parental responsibility), using the consent form.

Please make sure that when staff, pupils and students transition to test at home they understand they do not give written consent for this and ensure they are issued with the privacy notice for test at home. The way you should do this is set out in [How To Guide for Testing at Home - Blue Guide](#)

What happens if a school cannot get the consent to test a child who is in school/college?

Testing on site requires active consent from the person being tested, or, if they are under 16, their parent or legal guardian. Any staff member, student, or pupil who does not take part in testing will still be able to attend school or college unless they develop symptoms or have been in close contact with anyone with a positive result.

Can staff who have opted out join the testing programme at any point?

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

Do schools/colleges need to seek consent again from families who have already consented?

Although it is good practice to update consent forms regularly, secondary schools and colleges do not need to re-seek consent for pupils/students who have already provided consent for the purposes of ATS testing on return in the autumn. However, if you wish to do so, please use the updated form on our [secondary schools and colleges document sharing platform](#). As a minimum, consent must be sought for any pupil/student who has not previously given consent for testing (e.g. new entrants in year 7) using the updated consent form template. Schools and colleges need to keep a record of consent for ATS testing and may wish to hold the information collected in the [COVID-19 Test Register](#).

Test process

What happens if a pupil, student, or member of staff's antigen LFD test result is positive?

If a pupil, student or member of staff conducts a LFD test at home *or* receives a supervised school/college-based LFD test as part of the rapid asymptomatic testing programme, and it is positive then they should self-isolate immediately in line with [NHS Test and Trace guidance](#). From 16 August fully vaccinated adults and those aged under 18 and 6 months identified as close contacts will not need to self-isolate



and instead will be advised to take a PCR test.

All positive results from rapid tests, whether conducted at home or at a school or college 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 staff, pupil or student should continue to self-isolate. Anyone who tests positive having taken a PCR test will still need to self-isolate regardless of their age or vaccination status. If the PCR test is negative, it overrides the LFD test and the staff, pupil or student can return to school or college.

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 staff have recently (within 90 days) had a positive PCR test for COVID-19, they are likely to have developed some immunity. Individuals are exempt from testing by both PCR and LFD within 90 days of a positive PCR test, unless they develop new symptoms.

However, individuals may choose to take an LFD test after the 10-day isolation period, for example as part of a workplace or community testing programme. This should only be done after completion of the required self-isolation period as per [the NHS stay at home guidance](#). If they test positive with a LFD test, they should self-isolate for 10 days or longer if symptomatic.

They are still required to self-isolate if they are identified as a close contact of a positive case, even if this is within the 90-day window, unless they are aged under 18 and 6 months or fully vaccinated.

SEND

How will asymptomatic testing be administered in a SEND context and will there be any additional support or resources for special schools or those with a high number of SEND pupils and students?

The Department for Education has provided [guidance on delivering asymptomatic testing in specialist settings](#).

What consideration is given to administering the test for SEND pupils and students or those with co-ordination issues who physically will not be able to



manage this due to poor fine motor skills? Will the Test assistant be able to do the test for them?

Special schools and specialist colleges have a range of staff to meet pupils and students' health needs. These staff already have undertaken various training to support health needs and could provide support taking swabs for those who cannot self-administer. Support for pupils who are unable to self-swab may be available. Support would be for children and young people whose physical and health needs prevent them from administering their own test, and where parents and/or existing school staff cannot assist.

What about students with SEND who will not be able to manage a self-swab who are in a mainstream school?

Support for pupils who are unable to self-swab may be available if there are no suitable staff to administer tests. Support would be for children and young people whose physical and health needs prevent them from administering their own test, and parents or existing school staff cannot assist.

In some cases, the individual may wish to have a trusted adult from the setting to supervise the self-swab of the test. The setting may also wish to consider whether it would agree in exceptional circumstances to a parent coming into the setting to support their child to self-swab or to swab their child, or whether it would be more appropriate for the individual to be tested at home. This might be a reasonable adjustment for the testing of a child or young person with a disability, for example.

Miscellaneous Questions

Do test results get affected by brushing teeth, drinking water?

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.

Can nose swabbing be done on those with nose piercings?

Yes. If you have nose piercings, remove the piercings before swabbing. If swabbing one nostril is not possible, proceed with the other nostril.

Are the swabs latex free?

The manufacturer has confirmed that the swabs are latex free.

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

The products within the lateral flow test kit (including the devices themselves and the extraction buffer fluid) are not hazardous.



The swabbing and processing of a test does not inactivate the virus so caution should be taken when handling the test and when managing spillages as live virus may be present.

If a spillage does occur use a disposable cloth or paper towel, mop up the spillage and dispose of in the bag provided. The area should then be cleaned and disinfected, again the disposable cloth or paper towel should be disposed of in the bag provided.

Can schools dispose of LFD waste with general waste?

Yes. Although LFD waste was initially classified as healthcare waste when schools started testing, we have worked closely with PHE, Defra and the Environment Agency to assess the risks of disposing of LFD waste. As testing is not the primary activity for schools it has been agreed that used devices can be disposed of as general waste.

Why is LFD waste being treated differently in schools compared with other settings such as NHS sites?

LFD waste from schools / FE colleges and workplaces where healthcare is not the primary activity can be coded differently to DHSC / NHS sites where the primary activity is healthcare. More detailed advice is on the Document Sharing Platform.

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

The monoclonal antibody technology present in our lateral flow devices are necessarily generated from animal cells. This is in common with other tests of this kind, including commercially available pregnancy tests. The swab itself does not contain animal products.

During development, at no time have any component parts been tested on animals.

The Vegan Society advises vegans avoid using products made from animals as far as is practicable and possible and vegans should never stop taking prescribed medications without first talking to your doctor.

Are the LFD tests vegan?

No animal products have been used in the production of the swabs that come into direct contact with the individual using the test.

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 necessarily



generated from animal cells. This is in common with other tests of this kind, including commercially available pregnancy tests. It is for individuals to make their own decisions based on their religious practises or dietary choices.

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 is generated from animal cells. This is in common with other tests of this kind, including commercially available pregnancy tests.

Is the LFD test safe for those that are pregnant?

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