

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Testing Advice for Schools, Parents and Carers

Information from Cumbria County Council Public Health Team; 25 March 2021

Two different types of COVID-19 tests are now available:

1. **“Rapid” (LFD) tests** are processed immediately in a plastic test kit and give results in 30 minutes. They are used to detect cases in people **WITHOUT** symptoms.
 2. **“Full” (PCR) tests** are processed in a laboratory, and give results within 48 hours. They are used to confirm suspected cases of COVID-19, for example in people **WITH** symptoms.
- Rapid (LFD) tests should **NOT** be used routinely on children of primary school age or younger
 - People who test positive via a Full (PCR) test are exempt from Rapid (LFD) testing for 90 days
 - Rapid (LFD) and Full (PCR) tests are **NOT** the same – see page 3 for more information

Situation	What you should do	Back to school?
Child NOT showing symptoms and NOT a close contact of a positive case	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary school child: no testing required • Secondary school child: continue rapid testing twice a week • Other adult household members: continue rapid testing twice a week 	Attend school as normal
Child has a positive result from a Rapid (LFD) test supervised by a trained tester (e.g. at school or rapid test site)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child and household must stay at home for 10 days and follow the ‘stay at home’ guidance • A follow-up Full (PCR) test is NOT required, and does NOT affect the isolation time 	After completing 10-day isolation
Child has a positive result from a Rapid (LFD) test NOT supervised by a trained tester (e.g. at home)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child and household must stay at home • Book a follow-up Full (PCR) test for the child as soon as possible, either online or by phoning 119 if no internet access • Test site appointments must be booked in advance, and Full (PCR) tests are only available in the mornings (8am – 1pm) 	<p><u>Follow-up PCR positive:</u> After completing 10-day isolation</p> <p><u>Follow-up PCR negative:</u> End isolation and return to school straight away</p>
Child has a positive Full (PCR) test	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child and household must stay at home for 10 days and follow ‘stay at home’ guidance • If anyone else in the household develops symptoms, DO NOT use a rapid (LFD) test – book a PCR test. If this is positive, that individual must extend their isolation time, as explained here • As long as no symptoms, other adult household members can carry out rapid (LFD) testing, but MUST get a ‘full’ (PCR) test if an LFD is positive 	After completing 10-day isolation, as long as they are well enough and no temperature for 48 hours.
Child has one or more of the 3 main symptoms of COVID-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole household must stay at home and follow ‘stay at home’ guidance. • Book a Full (PCR) test for the child as soon as possible, either online or by phoning 119 if no internet access 	<p><u>Full PCR positive:</u> After completing 10-day isolation if well enough and no temperature for 48 hours.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Test site appointments must be booked in advance, and Full (PCR) tests are only available in the mornings (8am – 1pm) • DO NOT USE A RAPID (LFD) test. A negative LFD test is not valid in individuals with COVID-19 symptoms. Child cannot return to school for 10 days unless they have a negative Full PCR test. 	<p><u>Full PCR negative:</u> Straight away, as long as not isolating for a different reason</p>
Child is ill, but does NOT have one of 3 COVID-19 symptoms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary school child: no testing required • Secondary school child: continue rapid testing twice a week • Other adult household members: continue rapid testing twice a week • Children with vomiting or diarrhoea should remain off school for 48 hours after their symptoms have cleared • Additional testing may be advised by the school in some instances, e.g. if there have been other positive cases in the last 10 days. 	Continue attending school if well enough and no diarrhoea or vomiting for 48 hours
Child is a close contact of a person with a positive Full (PCR) test	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child should stay at home for 10 full days following close contact with a positive case • Other household members do not need to stay at home, unless they are also close contacts or are a positive case themselves • No additional testing is required unless symptoms develop. Secondary school children and adults in the household should continue rapid testing twice a week. • If child or other household member develops symptoms, DO NOT USE A RAPID (LFD) TEST. Instead, book a Full (PCR) test as soon as possible. 	<p>After completing their 10-day isolation period, provided child does not develop symptoms.</p> <p>PLEASE NOTE: a negative test will NOT shorten the isolation period. Therefore there is no need for additional testing unless symptoms develop.</p>
Child is a close contact of a person with a positive rapid (LFD) test supervised by a trained tester (e.g. at school or rapid test site)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child must stay at home for a full 10 days following close contact with case • If child or other household member develops symptoms, DO NOT USE A RAPID (LFD) TEST. Instead, book a Full (PCR) test as soon as possible. 	At end of 10-day isolation period, provided child does not develop symptoms
Child is a close contact of a person with a positive rapid (LFD) test NOT supervised by a trained tester (e.g. at home)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child should stay at home whilst awaiting the positive case's follow-up Full (PCR) test to confirm the result • Other household members do not need to stay at home, unless they are also close contacts or are a positive case themselves • If the Full (PCR) result is positive, the child must complete their 10-day isolation period • If the Full (PCR) result is negative, the child can end their isolation straight away. 	Schools will keep families updated about the results of follow-up testing, and let them know when children can return

What is the difference between a rapid COVID-19 test and a full COVID-19 test?

Rapid COVID-19 test

- Also known as a 'Lateral Flow' or 'rapid antigen' test.
- This is a plastic test kit which gives a result within 30 minutes. The photo shows what a home kit may look like.
- You can complete a rapid test at home, work or school. If you are an essential worker, [local centres](#) are available for supervised rapid tests.
- You need to follow the instructions carefully to give an accurate result.
- You record the results yourself following the online [guidance](#)
- This type of test is used for people WITHOUT symptoms of COVID-19 to see if they are infectious and able to transmit the virus to others.
- A positive rapid test means a person is likely to be infectious even though they do not have symptoms. The level of sensitivity is high enough to detect the vast majority of these cases.
- Rapid tests should NOT be used if a person has one of the [3 main symptoms of COVID-19](#). This is because a negative test cannot rule out infection.
- On advice from Public Health England (PHE), pupils in primary schools and children in nursery settings are not included in the rapid asymptomatic testing programme.
- PHE has advised that there are currently limited public health benefits to testing primary-aged pupils with lateral flow devices (LFD). In addition, primary-aged pupils, particularly younger children, may find the LFD testing process unpleasant and are unable to self-swab.
- **Positive results from rapid tests taken at home need to be followed up by a Full (PCR) test. This is because the test needs to be verified if not supervised by trained testers.**



Full COVID-19 test

- A Full test (also known as a 'PCR' test) is processed in a laboratory.
- You can take the swab sample for a Full test at a local testing site or at home, but the sample will be sent off and you will receive the result within 48 hours. The photo shows what a home Full test kit looks like.
- This test is used to confirm suspected cases of COVID-19 e.g. where people are showing symptoms or have carried out a non-supervised/home rapid test
- It is more sensitive than a rapid test and will therefore identify cases, even when their level of infectiousness is lower.



For more information on testing, including how to book a test and access rapid testing kits, please see the Government's [COVID-19 testing advice](#).