



17th February 2021

COVID-19 asymptomatic testing programme for school staff and senior phase pupils (S4-6)

Dear Parent/Guardian,

I am writing to let you know about the new Schools Asymptomatic Testing Programme, which is being put in place as part of the package of COVID-19 risk reduction mitigations in schools across Scotland, and to give you more information about how the programme will operate in our school.

If your child is in S4-6, this programme applies to them as soon as they return to school. There are three groups:

- 1) If your child is already attending school for Key Worker Childcare or to receive support services, they will already have been given a hard copy of this letter, a consent form and other information relating to the programme. Please return the consent form the next time they are in school, so that they can be given their test kit.
- 2) If your child is taking one of the following SQA courses, you will shortly receive information asking them to attend school on specific days from Monday 22nd February onwards to be able to complete practical work. Please complete the consent form sent with this letter and bring it to the school office as soon as possible to collect their test kit. Test kits are available for collection during school hours from today onwards; ideally you will collect the kit this week and your child will take their first covid test before they attend school next week.

National 5: Fashion, Music Technology, Metalwork, Woodwork, Hospitality, Drama, Admin, Art, Computing

Higher: Photography, Admin, Art, Computing, Music Technology

Advanced Higher: Music Technology

- 3) All other Senior Phase pupils will be invited to collect test kits once we know from the Scottish Government what the arrangements are for their return to school. The next announcement on this from the First Minister is due on Tuesday 2nd March, and is expected to set out plans for a gradual return to school from 15th March onwards.

Please see below detailed information about the programme. There is also more information in other documents attached if you want to read further – a fact-sheet, privacy information telling you what is done with the test result data, as well as the consent form.

I encourage all eligible pupils to participate in the testing programme as this, alongside all the other infection control measures taking place, will contribute to reducing infection rates to a level which means we can begin to bring pupils back to school in greater numbers and ultimately move towards restoring some normality in our lives.

Jane Partridge, Head Teacher

Why is our school participating in the programme?

Along with the other protective measures we are implementing to keep our school community safe, regular testing of staff and senior phase pupils will help to further reduce risks for staff and children and young people in our school.

It will do so 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.

Who can take part?

The regular testing is open to all school staff and Senior Phase pupils (S4-6) who are regularly attending the school premises.

Does everyone have to take part?

Testing is voluntary. No-one who is otherwise permitted to come to school will be prevented from doing so just because they do not wish to participate. However, we are strongly encouraging all school staff and Senior Phase pupils who are attending school to participate wherever possible, in order to contribute to the wellbeing of our school community.

However, if staff or pupils are working or learning from home, they should not participate. This is because the programme is intended specifically to reduce risks in the school environment.

What will the testing involve?

Our school is being provided with a supply of Lateral Flow Device (LFD) test kits by the Scottish Government and the UK Department of Health and Social Care for use at home. We will give each participating staff member and Senior Phase pupil a supply of these test kits to take home, together with the 'Instructions for Use'. Each staff member and Senior Phase pupil will be asked to sign for these in a log at the point of handover. Completion of this test kit log is a regulatory requirement.

We will then ask individuals to test regularly at home, twice a week (every three to four days). Ideally the test should be taken in the morning before school on a day when you are due to attend school; we appreciate however that the first time you do this you may wish to do it the evening before attending school so that there is less time pressure.

The tests supplied do not require laboratory processing and can provide a quick result in around 30 minutes. Comprehensive guidance on conducting self-testing is contained in the blue A5 'Instructions for Use' booklet which will be provided with the test kit. There is a useful video showing participants how to administer the test here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S9XR8RZxKNo&list=PLvaBZskxS7tzQYIVg7lwH5uxAD9UrSzGJ&index=1>

Once the test has been conducted individuals must log the test result – whether positive, negative or void – online at www.gov.uk/report-covid19-result. Tests are free of charge and will be provided by the school.

NB: It is important to note that this regular testing is only for individuals without symptoms. Those with symptoms must continue to follow the usual guidance. They must self-isolate and call 888211 to book a PCR test at the earliest opportunity. People with symptoms must not rely on a negative LFD result to continue to attend school.

NB: A negative test result must not be taken as leave to relax or ignore physical distancing or other measures intended to reduce transmission – testing is an additional intervention that contributes to reducing risk.

What happens next?

- Senior Phase pupils who are currently attending school, for key worker childcare or other support

Your child will bring home printed information about the test and a consent form. Please discuss the contents of this letter and the privacy notice with your child. If your child wishes to participate in testing, and you are content for them to do so, please complete the consent form and return it to school **at the earliest opportunity**. If your child is over 16 they may give consent themselves; if they are under 16 parental consent is required. When the consent form is received in school your child will be issued with their first test kit to bring home. They should then begin taking tests twice a week, and should ideally take their first test immediately before returning to school. You are welcome to bring in consent forms and collect test kits on days your child is not attending school.

Each box of tests contains 3 test kits. The school First Aiders are responsible for the distribution of further kits, which pupils can collect in the foyer as they leave at the end of the day.

- Senior Phase pupils who are returning to school from 22nd February onwards to complete practical work
A small number of pupils taking SQA courses requiring practical work will be returning to school on a limited basis from 22nd February. If this applies to your child you will receive a separate letter to inform you when they should attend.

Parents of these pupils are asked to please discuss the contents of this letter and the attached privacy notice with your child. If your child wishes to participate in testing, and you are content for them to do so, please complete the attached consent form. If your child is over 16 they may give consent themselves; if they are under 16 parental consent is required.

Ideally, your child should take their first test at home **before** they start to come to school for practical work. To enable this to happen, please bring the completed consent form to the School Office during normal school hours on February 17th – 19th and you will be given a test kit to take home. If you are unable to do this, your child will be issued with a test kit on their first day in school.

Each box of tests contains 3 test kits. The school First Aiders are responsible for the distribution of further kits, which pupils can collect in the foyer as they leave at the end of the day.

- All other Senior Phase pupils

As further details of the return to school programme are announced, we will make arrangements for testing kits to be supplied to pupils who are due to return.

We will continue to support and communicate with our staff, pupils and school communities as we implement this programme. Please let us know if you have any questions. In the meantime, some Frequently Asked Questions can be found in the annex to this letter.

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 <https://www.facebook.com/stromnessacademy/>

website: www.stromnessacademy.org.uk

Annex – Frequently Asked Questions

How will my child know how to use the tests?

The school will provide those participating with the most up to date Instructions for Use along with their test kits. Participants will be asked to ensure they use these, and not the ones that are pre-packaged in the test kits.

The Instructions for Use set out clearly how to use the test kits, or how to support someone to do so. They also provide a number to call if there are any problems with the test kits.

Are the tests safe and accurate?

LFD tests have been widely and successfully used to detect COVID-19 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 approved the use of these at-home tests for these purposes.

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 someone tests positive using an LFD, it is likely that they 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.

What happens if there is 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).

For incidents occurring in a home setting, please report any issues (for example: something damaged, or missing or difficult to use in the kit, you are unable to log a result) 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.) please report it 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.

What happens if my child tests positive?

If your child receives a positive result on your Lateral Flow Device at home, they must report the result online at www.gov.uk/report-covid19-result, self-isolate and book a confirmatory PCR test. This can be done by calling 888211.

It is important that your child begins self-isolation immediately after they receive the positive result from the LFD test, and does not wait until the result of their PCR test.

What happens if my child tests negative?

They must report the result online at www.gov.uk/report-covid19-result. Individuals who test negative will be able to stay in schools and resume their activities as normal.

What happens if the test result is “void”?

This means the test has not run correctly. Your child must report the result online at www.gov.uk/report-covid19-result. They will need to take another test. Use a new test kit, and do not reuse anything from the first kit.

What if my child has been in close contact with someone who tests positive?

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.

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

What if my child develops symptoms?

This testing programme at school is for people with no symptoms. If your child develops symptoms at any time (such as a high temperature; a new, continuous cough; or a loss or change to their sense of smell or taste) they must immediately self-isolate, and book a test by calling 0800 028 2816 or visiting <https://www.nhsinform.scot/>. People with symptoms must not rely on a negative LFD result to continue to attend school.

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 or senior phase pupils taking part are not eligible.

If family members experience COVID-19 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.