**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

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| **Situation** | **What you should do** | **Back to school?** |
| Child NOT showing symptoms and NOT a close contact of a positive case | * 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) | * Child and household must stay at home for 10 days and follow the ‘stay at home’ [guidance](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-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) | * Child and household must stay at home * Book a follow-up Full (PCR) test for the child as soon as possible, either [online](https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test) 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) | Follow-up PCR positive: After completing 10-day isolation  Follow-up PCR negative:  End isolation and return to school straight away |
| Child has a positive Full (PCR) test | * Child and household must stay at home for 10 days and follow ‘stay at home’ [guidance](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance) * If anyone else in the household develops symptoms, DO NOT use a rapid (LFD) test – [book a PCR test](https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test). If this is positive, that individual must extend their isolation time, as explained [here](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/961291/Stay_at_home_illustration_Feb_2021.pdf) * As long as no symptoms, other adult household members can carry out rapid (LFD) testing, but MUST [get a ‘full’ (PCR) test](https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-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](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/symptoms/) | * Whole household must stay at home and follow ‘stay at home’ [guidance](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance). * Book a Full (PCR) test for the child as soon as possible, either [online](https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test) 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) * 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. | Full PCR positive: After completing 10-day isolation if well enough and no temperature for 48 hours.  Full PCR negative: Straight away, as long as not isolating for a different reason |
| Child is ill, but does NOT have one of 3 COVID-19 symptoms | * 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 | * 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](https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test) as soon as possible. | After completing their 10-day isolation period, provided child does not develop symptoms.  PLEASE NOTE: a negative test will NOT shorten the isolation period. Therefore there is no need for additional testing unless symptoms develop. |
| 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) | * 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](https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-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) | * 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 canend 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?**

Text, letter

Description automatically generated**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 centre](https://www.cumbria.gov.uk/coronavirus/communitytestingsites.asp)s 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](https://www.gov.uk/report-covid19-result)
* 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](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/symptoms/). 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](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-getting-tested).